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DISCERNING
GENTLEMAN

HUNTER S. THOMPSON

THE WINTERING OF
THE ARAB SPRING

EASTBOUND AND
DOWN: THE BIRTH
OF REDNECK CINEMA

JIMMY KIMMEL
THE INTERVIEW

MOTORCYCLE PREVIEW

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CHRIS HARDWICK
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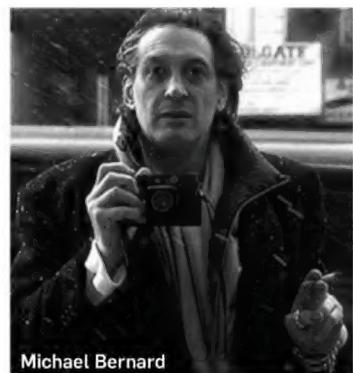
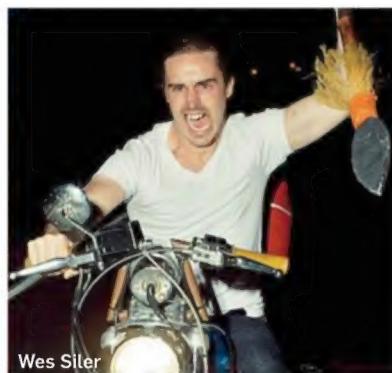
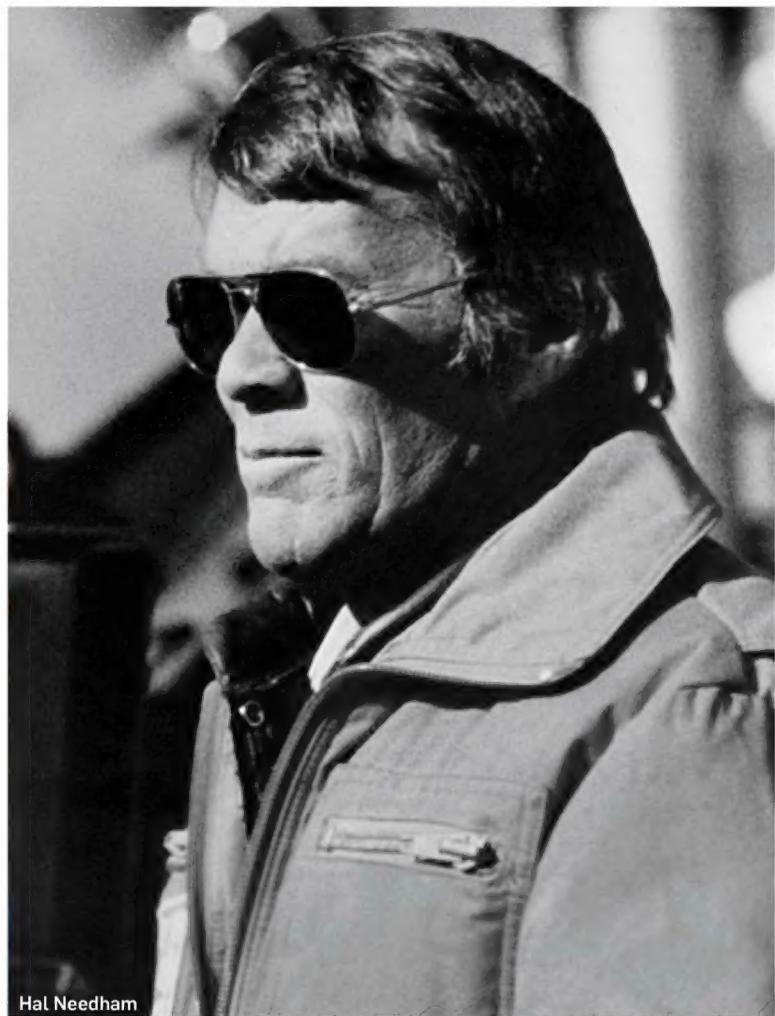
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No man is immune to the adrenaline spike that accompanies spring's thaw. A short skirt on a beauty with a twinkle in her eye, the roar of a roadster's engine pulling out of the garage on fresh tires—it's that time of year. To celebrate, we offer a new issue dripping with thrills and sex and challenging ideas. Let's start with a writer who personifies all those things: **Hunter S. Thompson**. Continuing our celebration of the 50th anniversary of the *Playboy Interview*, we bring you an excerpt from Thompson's 1974 classic. Expect drug-induced madness and Nixon bashing. Thank Contributing Editor James Franco for inviting Hollywood siren **Mila Kunis** to the party. In *Francofile*, you'll find Kunis—whose film *Oz: The Great and Powerful* hits this month—in all her glory. Speaking of Tinseltown, we look back on the wonderful life and times of film director **Hal Needham** in *The Birth of Redneck Cinema*. Needham launched a genre of testosterone-fueled films with crashing cars and girls in bikinis—see *The Cannonball Run* and *Smokey and the Bandit*, for example. The Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences honored him in December. Now we are honoring him in our pages. Moving from big screen to small, in this month's interview **Jimmy Kimmel** explains why the behind-the-scenes world of late-night TV can be as funny as what you see on the show. We are also pleased to publish a portfolio by Parisian photographer **David Bellemere**, whose pictures of model Karolina Szymczak sans clothing will leave you breathless. "One of the sexiest bodies I have ever discovered," Bellemere says. Coming from him, that's saying something. **Wes Siler** certainly loves this time of year—the start of motorcycling season. In *Thunder Road*, the man behind hellforleathermagazine.com hits the road on this year's hottest bikes. What goes with motorcycles better than hot girls in lingerie? Nothing! Turn to *The Language of Lingerie*, our guide to buying the right look for your partner in crime. The story was photographed by lensmaster **Michael Bernard**. From bikes and babes we go to Russian literature, naturally. **Ludmilla Petrushevskaya** is one of Russia's greatest contemporary writers. *The Goddess Parka*, selected from her new book *There Once Lived a Girl Who Seduced Her Sister's Husband*, is a tale of stark romance that questions the mythology of love. Finally, we spotlight "the Nerdist" **Chris Hardwick** in *20Q*. Find out why Hardwick has become the comedian and TV personality of choice for a generation of geeks. See, we told you this issue would drip with adrenaline and sex and challenging ideas. And we haven't even gotten to Miss March yet. She's waiting for you inside. Now turn the page and let's get rolling.



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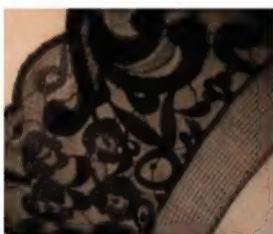
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COVER STORY

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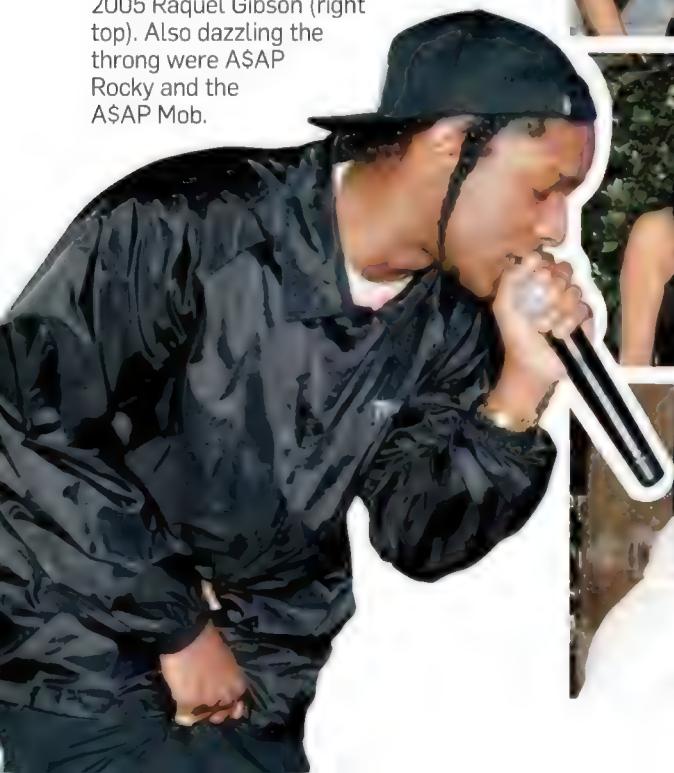
LONDON'S NYE PARTY

Cooper Hefner flew across the pond to ring in 2013 eight hours ahead of the Mansion. Hef's youngest son hosted the United Kingdom's hottest New Year's Eve party at Playboy Club London. Decked out in swinging retro style for the *Mad Men*-themed soiree, revelers descended on Old Park Lane for an evening with Hefner, British Bunnies and champagne towers galore.



PLAYBOY'S ART BASEL

During Miami's Art Basel—the in-crowd's exposition—Playboy launched a chic leather bralette at a party with the Hole gallery at the Delano. The bralette was created by Cushnie et Ochs, the design team of Michelle Ochs and Carly Cushnie (right middle), and shown off by Miss February 1999 Stacy Fuson and Miss November 2005 Raquel Gibson (right top). Also dazzling the throng were A\$AP Rocky and the A\$AP Mob.



SWEET TREATS

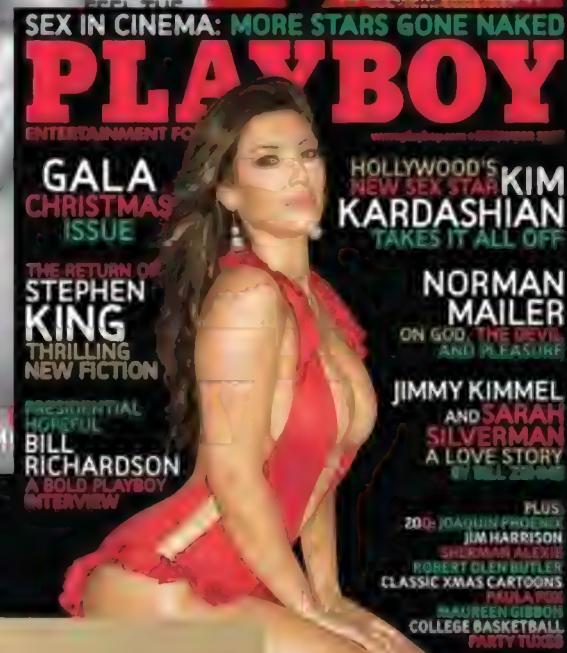
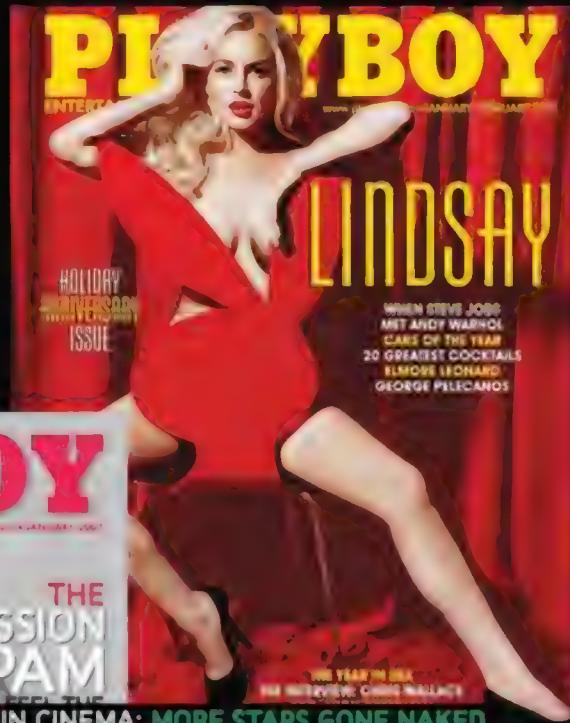
Sugarplums and fairies have nothing on gingerbread and the girls of the Mansion. Leading up to Christmas, Kimberly Phillips, Melissa Dawn Taylor, Trisha Frick, Crystal and Caya Hefner made gingerbread houses. Fun in the Sun guests decorated gingerbread men and then sank their teeth into them.



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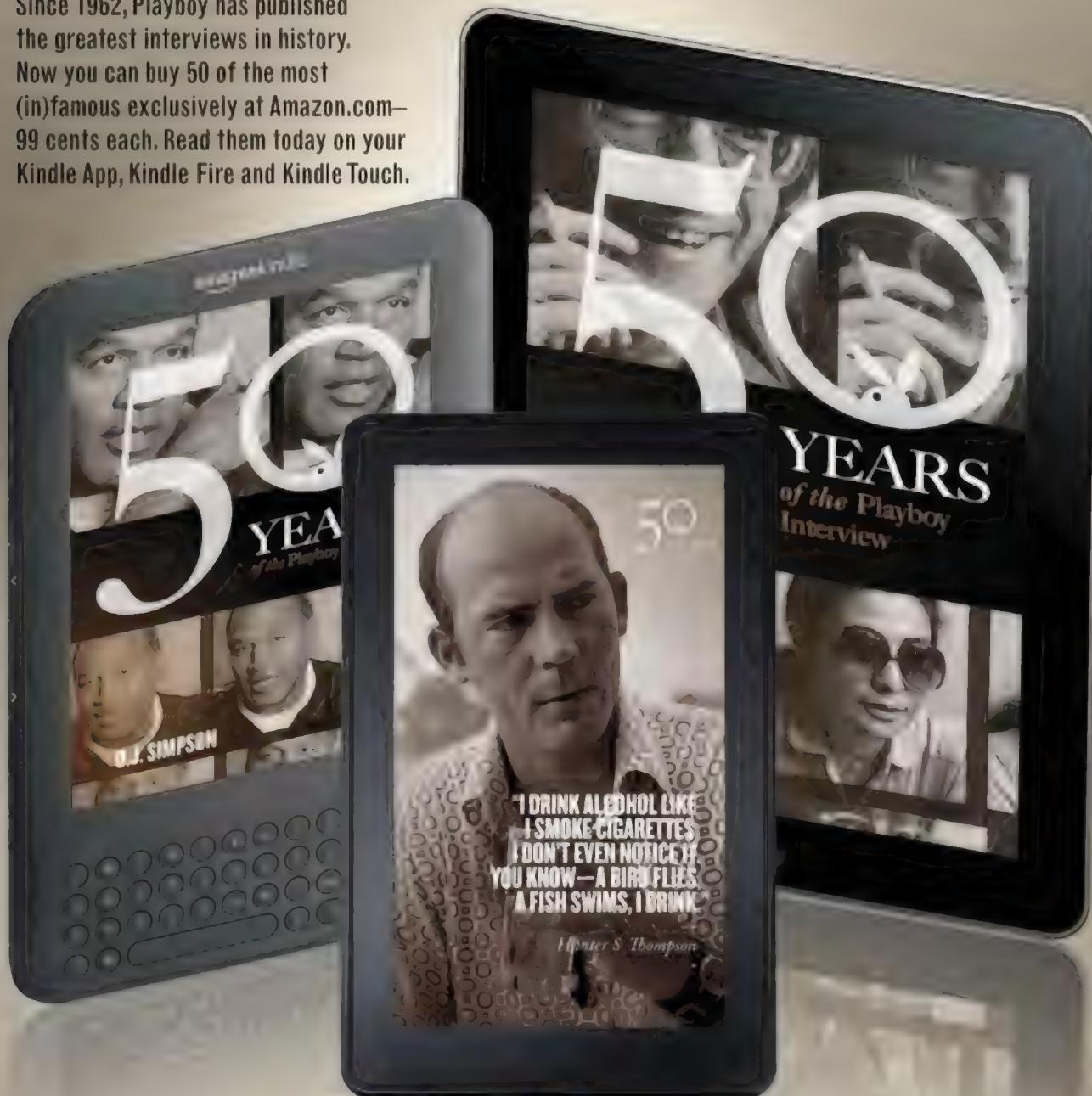
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NEW BEGINNINGS

HEF AND CRYSTAL TIE THE KNOT

Let us introduce Mr. and Mrs. Hefner. Hugh M. Hefner wed Crystal Harris on New Year's Eve at the Playboy Mansion. In an intimate affair, the couple's family and close friends witnessed the validation of Hef and Crystal's love. The bride's stepfather gave her away under a bower of pink, purple and white flowers that complemented her blush Romona Keveza mermaid gown. The legendary aquatic creatures were a wedding theme inspired by Crystal's favorite movie, *The Little Mermaid*, as shown on the wedding cake, which was adorned with a mermaid bride and merman groom. Hef, best man Keith Hefner and Charlie (the couple's dog) wore tuxedos and received congratulations from guests arriving for the Playboy New Year's Eve party, which doubled as a wedding reception.



HAPPY 2013

The Hefners hosted a posh New Year's Eve party where couples Joe Don Rooney and PMOY 2005 Tiffany Fallon, and Evan Longoria and Miss January 2010 Jaime Faith Edmondson kissed as the balloons and confetti dropped.



DANGEROUS GAMES

You left out an important aspect of the Cuban Missile Crisis in your introduction to the classic January 1967 *Playboy Interview* with Fidel Castro (November). The U.S. had set up nuclear missiles in Turkey before Castro allowed the Soviets to place theirs in Cuba. President Kennedy made a secret deal with Nikita Khrushchev in 1962 to dismantle the missiles aimed at Moscow if the Soviets would remove theirs from Cuba. So who should be considered the aggressor in this crisis that nearly annihilated the planet?

Frank Gubasta
Fort Myers, Florida

REASONABLE POINTS

I am appalled by many of the responses in November to the *Playboy Interview* with the noted atheist and evolutionary biologist Richard Dawkins (September). Dawkins may come off as arrogant, but he's certainly not as arrogant as people who believe a supernatural entity cares what they do. Religion is about control, plain and simple. If people need to believe a fairy tale—and act honestly only because they fear eternal damnation—I consider them very much beneath me.

Phil Drifter
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

A reader in November advances the nonsensical argument that because Dawkins feels "privileged" to be alive, an omnipotent consciousness must have instilled the ability to acknowledge that experience. Evolution wholly accounts for man's ability to perceive, understand, calculate and emote. No one "granted" Dawkins the right to feel a sense of privilege, just as no one made grass green or instructed bees to form hives. All life is a product of an ongoing process that began some 10 billion years ago.

Thomas Ferrugia
Forest Hills, New York

BLUES BATTLES

As a onetime guitarist for the band Blue Cheer and a professional player for more than 50 years, I am taken aback by Rob Tannenbaum's assertion in his review of Gary Clark Jr.'s new album that "Cray was better than Vaughan" (*After Hours*, December). Robert Cray has never played an original lick in his life, while Stevie Ray Vaughan is on a level with Les Paul, Chet Atkins, B.B. King, Dick Dale and Jimi Hendrix.

Troy Spence Jr.
Brookings-Harbor, Oregon

WINNING DRIVE

As a teacher and father, I appreciate people with strong character. Jon Gruden (*Inside the Head of Football's Greatest Nerd*, December) may seem eccentric, but we would all benefit if we had his fervor. Rather than return to coaching, I hope

DEAR PLAYBOY

One Degree of Lee

In *After Atwater* (November), J.C. Gabel says Lee Atwater remains unique as a political strategist, which is true. But more than 20 years after his death, members of "Atwater's army" still wield considerable influence. His legions include Haley Barbour, Roger Stone, Mary Matalin, Roger Ailes, Ben Ginsberg, Andy Card, George W. Bush (whom Atwater called "Duby"), Karl Rove (Atwater ran his campaign to become chairman of the College Republican National Committee), Charlie Black, Jim Pinkerton (whom colleagues called "Atwater's brain"), Ed Rogers, Ed Rollins and on and on. Political campaigns have long been nasty, but Atwater took them to new lows. He died a terrible death, sending letters of apology and asking for forgiveness, but the bell had been rung. You can hardly turn anywhere in politics



today without finding him one or two degrees away.

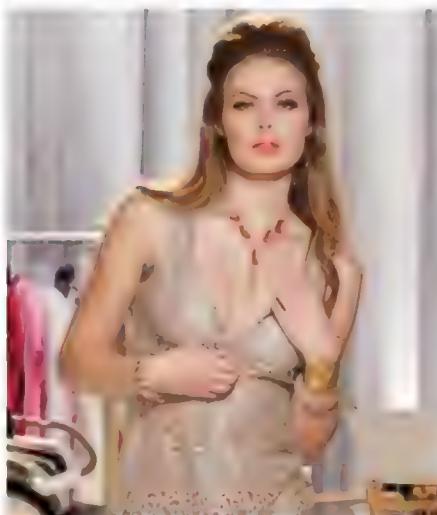
John Brady
Newburyport, Massachusetts
*Brady is author of *Bad Boy: The Life and Politics of Lee Atwater*.*

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Christopher Barnes
Germansville, Pennsylvania

POLE POSITION

Every month I find plenty of reminders why I've subscribed to *PLAYBOY* since



Amanda Streich is a Polish delight.

I was a teenager, but learning that Playmate Amanda Streich is a native of Poland was the cherry on top of 2012 (*Girl on Film*, December). Coming from strong Polish roots, I am proud to see her represent my favorite month of the year. I'd be happy to be her date on a visit to the motherland. *Dziękuję bardzo*, *PLAYBOY*, and *na zdrowie!*

Chad White
Columbus, Ohio

FREEDOM LOVER

Do you believe in Jungian synchronicity? When the November issue arrived with your send-up of the Uncle Sam recruiting poster on its cover, I had just finished two weeks of intense work on a music video for an antiwar song called "If I Was You" that features Barack Obama, Mitt Romney, George W. Bush, Dick Cheney and former Salt Lake City mayor Rocky Anderson on the same poster. I won't bore you with a statement about my politics, but I will tell you I decided to vote for Shera.

Dave Elder
Vestal, New York

As a soldier recently returned from Afghanistan, I am put off that you used a Canadian model to portray Uncle Sam, a symbol of American patriotism.

Ben Taylor
Anchorage, Alaska
She's North American—close enough.

FOUND WISDOM

Richard Warren Lewis's classic 1972 *Playboy Interview* with Jack Nicholson (December) is fascinating and surprisingly fresh. For someone who claims to be a nonintellectual, Nicholson comes across as the best kind of psychedelic and spiritual guy without being pretentious. Jack was a strange and honest 34-year-old—my age. His take on 35 being "probably the last time you can consider abandoning what you've started and getting into something totally new" is inspiring to read.

Michael Kline
Memphis, Tennessee

ROCK

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TALKING TOO FAST

I am a registered Republican, but I have moved toward the political center because of conservatives' ideas about women's reproductive rights, among other issues. However, your article *Screwed* (November) upset me. Nancy L. Cohen is contributing to the problem in American politics today. When given a soapbox, those in the media paint their opponents into a small corner. Don't muddy your great institution with partisan rhetoric.

Darren Drake
Sacramento, California

LOVES OF HIS LIFE

Your November issue showcases the incredible array of women Hugh Hefner has dated during his lifetime (*Hef's Girlfriends*). I would be interested to know who is not included on this list—for example, the models and movie stars he's had flings with.

Thomas Pistone
Lake Norman, North Carolina
Got a minute?

LASTING IMPRESSION

I have finally been able to pinpoint what it is about Marilyn Monroe that makes her images so enduring (*The Nude Marilyn*, December). She reminds me—and I'm sure many other men—of a time in my life when I was coming of age and first driven mad by love, lust and longing for a young woman.

Roger Cloud
Madison, Alabama

Thank you for the outstanding tribute to Marilyn Monroe. Seeing a black-and-white photo of her on the cover evokes memories of your first issue.

Gordon King
Laconia, New Hampshire

If Marilyn had lived, "I believe she would have become a sweet little old lady," says Roger Ebert (*A Sense of Control*). "I don't think she would be such a big deal," says Hef. She would be a "discomfiting reminder of how we all age," writes John Updike (*A Broken Venus*). But I think George Carlin had it right when he wrote, "If Marilyn Monroe were alive today...there would still be guys lining up for a chance to fuck her."

Earl Flaherty
Whitneyville, Maine

Marilyn, why did you have to go? Thank you, *PLAYBOY*, for a wonderful tribute to the ultimate American blonde.

Juan Perez
La Pryor, Texas

LAWYERS IN A STRANGE LAND

Blowing past the margaritas and the mule in the bar, Adam Reposa is what a criminal defense attorney should be, especially in a state that regularly

executes people, some of them innocent (*Law and Disorder*, December). The prosecutors and judges involved in these railroad jobs are "sorry" only later, after they have been exposed. Instead of targeting corrupt prosecutors and judges, the state bar devotes itself to hounding attorneys like Reposa, who uses his brain against the collective brawn and has the audacity to win. You need to be crazy to buck a system that excoriates defense lawyers for doing their jobs, usually on behalf of the poor. Wish me luck in my own disbarment proceedings as I walk through the same fires Reposa has endured, and for the same reasons.

Theresa Caballero
El Paso, Texas

Caballero and her co-counsel Stuart Leeds face disbarment following their unusual convictions last year for criminal contempt. The attorneys had been characteristically aggressive while defending a judge accused of accepting bribes (she was acquitted). After the trial, the judge who oversaw the proceedings



Adam Reposa: seeking the advice of counsel.

filed a complaint, accusing the lawyers of being disruptive—even though, Leeds noted, "Our client isn't complaining." Among the charges: Caballero told prospective jurors that the judge and prosecutor were "on the same team" and ignored instructions from the bench to "move on" during her questioning of witnesses.

MISSING SCENE

As a movie buff I look forward each year to *Sex in Cinema* (December) to see which films I missed that feature hot female actors baring it all. I don't mind when you include the occasional non-nude shot, such as the one of Eva Green massaging Johnny Depp with her foot in *Dark Shadows*. But how could you use a photo of male strippers from *Magic Mike* instead of a shot of a topless Olivia Munn initiating a threesome?

Kevin Espie
Wolfeboro, New Hampshire
We need to watch that movie again.





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DAVID BITTON



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PLAYBOY

Afterhours

-MARCH-
2013



BECOMING ATTRACTION

KRISTEN HAGER

- "YOUR SENSES are heightened; you find that animal inside you—it's all about being in tune with yourself." It's no surprise Canadian actress Kristen Hager describes playing TV's sexiest werewolf in such seductive terms. As Nora on Syfy's *Being Human*, Kristen makes those body-ripping transformations look downright appealing. Is there a downside to being a werewolf? "Well, you're waking up naked in the woods somewhere all the time." Where do we sign up?



BALL HANDLING

A FULL-COURT PRESS TO CONVINCE MEN TO GET THE SNIP

• Vasectomy Madness, we're glad to report, isn't a horrifying mental condition—it's actually a promotional deal offered by Virginia Urology. Despite what that *Seinfeld* episode says, men don't exactly line up to have vasectomies, no matter how often urologists point out that it's the most cost-effective and safest form of birth control. As such, it's an excellent candidate for this type of pitch: Get snipped in March, and afterward you can lounge on the couch for two days watching March Madness basketball uninterrupted by your spouse. Some clinics even throw in a free pizza. Now these March Madness vasectomy deals are popping up all over the nation.

"It's difficult to promote us, in many ways, because of the sensitivity of what we do," says Terry Coffey, chief executive of Virginia Urology. "But we thought we could have some fun with it." One of the promotion's strengths is that it provides a way for couples to raise the issue. "A guy wouldn't

call up a urologist and say, 'I'm ready to get a vasectomy,'" says Evan Cohen, administrator at Urology Associates of Cape Cod, which runs a similar program. Cohen says the promotion has tripled the number of vasectomies his clinic performs in March. Other reports suggest a natural increase in vasectomies that month, thanks to the NCAA tournament's therapeutic qualities.

Perhaps that's why these promotions portray a cartoonish image of men as couch potatoes who want to watch sports and eat pizza: because it appeals to both men and women for all the right reasons. It provides women a way to raise a sensitive issue and offers men an upside where there was none before, especially when faced with giving

up their virility.

It is these concerns about masculinity that hamper the procedure's popularity. *The New York Times* reported in 2008 that each year only about 500,000 men have the procedure done in the U.S., compared with New Zealand, where nearly half of all men do so by the age of 50. "Men have some fears about vasectomies," says Coffey, "unfounded fears,

because it's a simple procedure." Your *vasa deferentia*, the tubes that supply your semen with sperm, are easily accessible and can be sealed without a scalpel. You're out of the clinic that day. Then you go home and nurse your manhood—both figurative and literal—back to health with some hoops and pizza for two days. "If you're good at it," says Coffey, "you can stretch it to three." —Willy Staley

Reports suggest a natural increase in vasectomies in March, thanks to the NCAA tournament's therapeutic qualities.

SEX AND THE SUPERHERO

A NEW COMIC BOOK HERO FACES HIS GREATEST FOE—HIS SEX LIFE

• Superpowers do not ensure a super sex life. Just witness Clark Kent, Peter Parker and legions of other caped crusaders fumbling around the opposite sex. "Superhero comics have always brushed against a very adolescent view of sexuality, and more often than not they're the most embarrassing examples of sex in comics," says Joe Casey, a veteran comic writer and partner in Man of Action Studios. These prepubescent portrayals led Casey to create *SEX*, his newest comic from the Man of Action imprint at Image Comics. Launching this month, the story follows Simon Cooke, a retired superhero forced to confront the failings

of his sex life. "He's not prepared for the world he must now live in," says Casey. "He's so repressed, based on everything he locked down inside himself when he was a superhero. He's going to be dancing on that razor's edge of what's out there." Although Casey has written for *Uncanny X-Men*, *Adventures of Superman* and other comics, he is best known as one of the creators of *Ben 10*, the multibillion-dollar—and decidedly unsexy—kids' franchise. "I'm a grown man, somewhat mature, and this is the type of subject matter I'm interested in exploring," he says. "Maybe it's my way of finding some weird creative balance in my life."



"**SUPERHERO COMICS HAVE ALWAYS BRUSHED AGAINST A VERY ADOLESCENT VIEW OF SEXUALITY.**"

— JOE CASEY



PRICE: \$145,000 for an eight-hour trip.

AIR APPARENT

THE NEXT FRONTIER OF SPACE TRAVEL MOVES CLOSER TO LIFTOFF



• Civilian space travel isn't rocket science, at least not anymore. For \$145,000 Barcelona-based company Zero2infinity will send you 22 miles above the Earth in a high-tech pod attached to a proprietary helium balloon. "The Bloon takes you to the very

edge of space. You have a window seat to the universe," says Zero2infinity CEO José Mariano López-Urdiales of the eight-hour journey. What if we want to have sex up there? "In fact, we encourage sex," he says. Here's what travelers are in for in 2014.—Harold Goldberg

STEP 01

→ Your party boards the 13-foot pod.

STEP 02

→ Liftoff! The balloon begins its ascent.

STEP 03

→ A two-hour cruise above Earth.

STEP 04

→ Dinner and drinks with a view of dawn.

STEP 05

→ Sail detaches. Parachute deploys.

STEP 06

→ Enjoy 25 seconds of zero gravity.

STEP 07

→ Pilots guide pod to landing site.

STEP 08

→ Shock absorbers inflate for landing.



OM RUN

MODERN MUMBAI IS NIRVANA TO THE ENLIGHTENED TRAVELER

• While Mumbai tops the bucket list of spiritual pilgrims, we suggest an itinerary that's more eat, *play*, love. Yes, the city is an intoxicating blend of saturated colors, street food sizzling on outdoor grills and about 13 million inhabitants, but it's also a modern metropolis that celebrates the good life with thumping dance clubs, upscale restaurants and some of the most gorgeous and stylish women on the planet. Time your trip for late March and catch the citywide street party that is the **Holi festival** (1).

If you're blessed enough to be in town on an expense account, check in to the cen-



CLUB PLAN

Hop a flight to Goa to check out the first in a series of Playboy Clubs opening in India.

trally situated **Four Seasons** (2), which has a dramatic rooftop bar, or the **Taj Mahal Palace** hotel in the Colaba business district, which can serve as a posh yet practical HQ for your stay.



Check off tourist must-sees such as the crowds of Chowpatty Beach, bustling **Fashion Street** (3) for sartorial finds and the field of amateur cricketers at Oval Maidan. Then let your stomach be your guide. Tuck into a plate of fried giant prawns and a frosty Kingfisher beer at **Trishna** in Fort for a reminder of the city's fishing-village roots. (Later, visit nearby **Everyday Project** (4) for mod stationery.) And if you're wondering where to find a refined take on chicken

tikka masala, it's at **Ziya at the Oberoi, Nariman Point**. It's approximately 100 times more flavorful than any version of the takeout staple available in the States and 100 percent less neon color.

Bypass the tacky stalls (and pickpockets) along the crowded Colaba Causeway in favor of concept shops where souvenirs deserving of suitcase real estate await. Just off the main drag, behind a heritage building facade, **Bombay Electric** houses the best of

India's indie fashion and a quirky stash of gadgets. A five-minute walk and a few flights of rickety stairs later, find **Bungalow Eight**'s three floors of clothing, accessories and housewares that are made using mostly traditional techniques and materials but styled for the here and now.

When the sun sets, head to Bollywood stomping ground Bandra and dance the night away to a DJ set at **Blue Frog** to see why Mumbai's the word.—*Crystal Meers*

BEAT THE STREET

HOW TO MAKE THE MOST OF MUMBAI'S MOVABLE STREET-FOOD FEAST

01

LIKE IT HOT

→ Stick to fried or right-off-the-grill grub (uncooked foods are bacteria bunkers). Skip the raw garnishes and chutneys.

02

SNACK WELL

→ Before going home, sample some *bhel puri*, an addictive, crunchy mix of fried noodles, spices and tamarind water.

03

SIT DOWN

→ Don't want to risk trying unfamiliar food stalls? Eat at *Swati Snacks*, a restaurant that offers some 60 street foods.

04

DRINK UP

→ Overdo it? Calm your nerves—and coat your stomach—with a stiff drink at *Harbour Bar*, the oldest watering hole in town.



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USE YOUR NOODLE

STANLEY TUCCI'S RULES FOR PERFECT PASTA

• In this era of gustatory one-upmanship, if you can't cook an expertly sauced bowl of al dente pasta from scratch, you can't call yourself a real man. Which is why we enlisted Stanley Tucci, the actor who plays Julia Child's husband in *Julie & Julia* and co-directed, co-wrote and stars in the foodie cult hit movie *Big Night*, to help us out with date night. Imported Italian canned tuna is the secret to his can't-fail sauce. "People go, 'Really?'" says Tucci. "But then they try it and it's so sweet and just so fucking delicious."

RECIPE

Spaghetti con Pomodoro e Tonno

→ This recipe was adapted from *The Tucci Cookbook*, a new collection of family recipes. Proceeds benefit the Food Bank for New York City.

1. Warm quarter cup of olive oil in a saucepan over medium-high heat. Add onion and cook until soft, about three minutes. Add tomatoes, crushing them well with the back of a slotted spoon. Season with salt and pepper and stir in basil. Simmer over medium-low heat until slightly thickened, about 25 minutes. Drain half the olive oil from canned tuna and pour the other half into sauce. Flake tuna into

tomato sauce. Cover and simmer to heat through. Remove from heat and set aside.

2. Meanwhile, bring a large pot of salted water to boil. Add pasta and cook until al dente. Drain, then toss pasta with remaining two tablespoons of olive oil. Add about three ladles of sauce and continue tossing. Distribute evenly among four dinner plates. Ladle remaining sauce on top.



INGREDIENTS

1/4 cup plus 2 tbsp. olive oil
1/4 cup coarsely chopped onion
4 cups canned whole plum tomatoes (about one 35-ounce can)
Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper
4 fresh basil leaves
1 six-ounce can Italian tuna, packed in olive oil
1 lb. spaghetti or linguine



TUCCI'S TIPS

Stanley's guide to your own big night

1

WHET THE APPETITE

→ "The fig is so vaginal. I suppose if you had figs and a phallus of salami that would be the perfect, extremely suggestive appetizer."

2

POUR PINOT NOIR

→ "Because the sauce has tuna in it, you shouldn't serve anything heavy. And tomato wants to be paired with something red."

3

PLAY ARMSTRONG

→ "I like jazz, particularly from the 1950s. You can't go wrong with Louis Armstrong. He spans such a long time and diversity of music."

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DRINK

ALL ABOUT STOUT

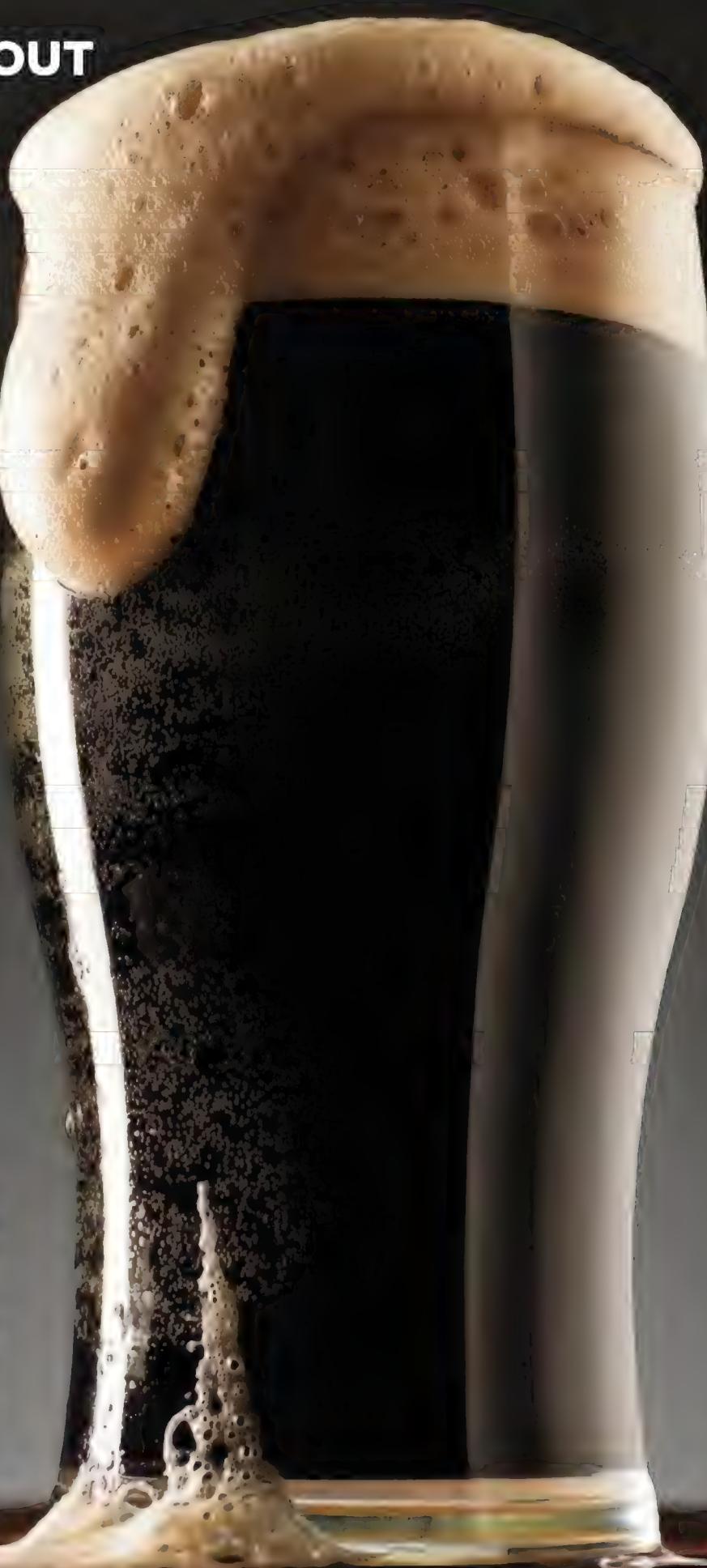
GO GLOBAL THIS ST. PADDY'S DAY WITH A PINT OF PORTER FROM BREWERIES AROUND THE WORLD

• You don't have to be Irish to get lucky this St. Patrick's day: Chances are there's a stout out there perfect for your taste. The strong dark beer made from roasted malt or barley first became popular with London's working-class river and street porters in the 1700s (hence its old moniker "stout porter"). Today wildly different styles are produced everywhere from Denmark to Japan: lighter English and Irish stouts, sweet oatmeal and milk stouts, strong Russian imperial stouts and even oyster stout, brewed with the bivalve to give extra body and protein to the beer. As for possible amorous side effects, that's just one more reason to love the stuff.

— Heather Johnson

THE SIPPING NEWS

Guinness master brewer Fergal Murray advises drinkers to raise their elbow high to "drink under the head" and taste the rich brown liquid beneath.



EVIL TWIN AÚN MÁS A JESÚS
This imperial stout from Denmark balances smoky, dark fruit flavors with crisp dryness.



GUINNESS
Despite its dark color and toasted flavors, Guinness is deceptively light in body and has just 125 calories per 12 ounces.



HARVEY & SON A. LE COQ IMPERIAL
This Russian-style double stout, brewed in England, has notes of vintage port, dark cherry, espresso and spice.



DESCHUTES OBSIDIAN STOUT
An American stout with strong espresso and dark chocolate flavors and molasses sweetness.



ITACHINO NEST SWEET STOUT
Hickory sugars are added to this Japanese stout, resulting in a smooth brew with sweet caramel and malibet chocolate flavors.

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Lighten Up

The soft sides of these bags make them light, while the leather details make them tough.



BEYOND THE BRIEFCASE

THE BEST MODERN BRIEFCASES HAVE GONE BUSINESS CASUAL

• Gone are the days of the clasp-lock, hard-sided briefcases of *Mad Men* and salarymen the world over. Today's dressed-down business environment means you have more bag choices than ever before that are practical, tactical and handsome as hell.

01

CARRY ON

→ Made of waxed sienna canvas with a tough black leather bottom, this small and sturdy bag is sized just right to fit a 17-inch laptop and other tools of your trade. *Billykirk No. 165 medium carryall, \$325*

02

BACK IT UP

→ The durable ballistic nylon and double-stitched seams make this American-made bag tough enough for the trails. The leather accents make it stylish enough for the office. *Altadena Works 801 Teardrop, \$245*

03

SQUARE ONE

→ This handsome canvas bag can bring a regimental air to the boardroom proceedings: The olive drab color is military cool, and the lines are crisp, sharp and classic. *Jack Spade Field Canvas briefcase, \$325*

WASH THIS WAY

HOW DENIM OBSESSIVES CLEAN THEIR JEANS



DENIM IS IN THE DETAILS

A perfectly aged pair of selvage denim tells a unique story about its wearer.

LEAVE YOUR IMPRINT

Cell phone, wallet and key-chain imprints are battle scars of the professional class.

SEE RED

Red or orange stitching on the fabric around the inseam is an indicator of top-quality denim.



PUSH THE CONTRAST

The best denim is dyed deeply with indigo, which makes creasing and wear patterns stand out.

PATCH PROUDLY

Patch up holes so your jeans don't go all shreddy Van Halen.

Raw & Order

See the jeans above? They're four years old. See the jeans below? That's how the jeans above looked when they were brand-new. Spiff up new raw denim with a dress shirt and blazer.



Indigo Rocker jeans, \$260, worldjeanshop.com

ILLUSTRATIONS BY TODD DETWILER

CARPE DENIM

SIT OUT THE BLUE JEAN TREND RACE AND INVEST IN STYLISH AND STURDY SELVAGE DENIM

• Before jeans came in a dizzying array of fits, colors and styles, there was selvage denim—the hardy fabric of cowboys and motorcycle rebels who wore their jeans not until they went out of fashion but until they wore out. (“Selvage,” or “self edge,” refers to the finished, woven seam that is the hallmark of high-quality denim.)

Today denim for jeans is rarely made the way it was in the early 20th century: on shuttle looms that produce a thicker fabric that holds indigo better and lasts longer. While fashion followers have prized selvage denim

for the past decade or so, in recent years more companies (we love Raleigh Denim, Nudie Jeans and Levi's Made & Crafted) have been selling selvage. The \$200 price tag on some styles may seem steep, but keep in mind they can last for up to six years. The best way to buy them is raw, which means they weren't washed after being dyed. “When you put on a pair of raw selvage denim, you can feel the difference,” says Eric Goldstein, owner of Jean Shop, the New York temple of denim. “It molds around you and becomes your own.”

1. GO DRY

→ Machine washing fades jeans fast. Raw denim can stand up to the dry cleaner; the indigo color will stay dark.



2. GO COLD

→ Putting off the first wash for six months allows detail to develop—but odors too. Destink jeans by freezing them.



3. GO DARK

→ When your jeans have developed character, wash them inside out by hand in cold water with Woolite Dark.



4. GO SWIMMING

→ Hard-core denim-heads do as denim pioneer APC suggests: They swim in the ocean while wearing their jeans.



MOVIE OF THE MONTH

A GOOD DAY TO DIE HARD

By Stephen Rebello

• John McClane (Bruce Willis) gets caught up in a deadly underworld heist of Russian nukes in this fifth installment of the long-running action series. This time

McClane gets an assist from his apparently wild and wayward estranged son, played by Jai Courtney (above right), the fast-rising Aussie seen on *Sparta-*

cus: Vengeance and in *Jack Reacher*. "I play a McClane, so I knew I'd get to rip plenty of wisecracks and do a lot of running, jumping and flying out of the backs of cars," says Courtney. "We were filming a big safe-house scene in a decrepit building in Budapest, and suddenly the action calls

for Bruce to break out a massive automatic weapon and tear the place apart while we crawl along the floor dodging bullets. That's when it hit me: I'm actually in a *Die Hard* movie. This installment has a new flavor, but it's definitely a *Die Hard* that won't disappoint the fans."

ROMAN À CLEF?

Roman Coppola, co-writer of *Moonrise Kingdom*, switches to the director's chair for the quirky comedy *A Glimpse Inside the Mind of Charles Swan III*.

Q: Charlie Sheen plays a glib, high-living, womanizing graphic designer in a tailspin over his ex-girlfriend in *A Glimpse Inside the Mind of Charles Swan III*. Is it based on someone you know?

A: I was interested in a character who is really out there, outrageous, childlike, exasperating. Charlie Sheen and I have been friends since I was 12. I was determined to have him in this even though he had trepidations, but I wouldn't take no for an answer.

Q: The movie is set in the 1970s and features Bill Murray, Jason Schwartzman, Patricia Arquette and lots of trippy sequences.

A: I wanted it to be playful and fantastical but about adult, men-women issues. Charlie's fantasies, especially a sexy one with the all-female Indian tribe called the Secret Society of Ball Busters, are very much like a *PLAYBOY* cartoon—humor blended with eroticism.

Q: This film sometimes feels very stoner and made for fun by a pack of cool friends.

A: Jason is a relative, and working with him, riffing off each other, is just a blast. Certain audiences are really going to dig this movie. I just want them to have a chance to see it.

TEASE FRAME
Emmy Rossum

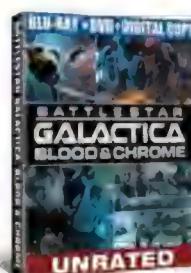
Emmy Rossum plays the eldest daughter of William H. Macy on Showtime's *Shameless* (above), and she has no shame about taking off her clothes—nor should she. See her next in the supernatural romance *Beautiful Creatures*.

DVD OF THE MONTH

BATTLESTAR GALACTICA: BLOOD & CHROME

By Bryan Reesman

• If you're seeking an old-school space opera ripe with chaotic cross fire, relentless Cylons and unisex showers, then the 10 episodes of this web series prequel will satiate your sci-fi craving. A young, cocky, battle-hungry Will Adama (Luke Pasqualino) joins the *Galactica* crew during the first Cylon War and soon embarks on a covert mission that could be a game changer if he doesn't get *frakking* smoked along the way (to use the show's favorite curse word). The fireworks this time are more visceral than political, but the drama is sensational. This all-new spin-off co-starring Ben Cotton, Jill Teed and Tricia Helfer comes to disc after its internet run and recent premiere on the Syfy cable channel. (BD) **Best extras:** Deleted scenes and a look behind *Blood & Chrome's* visual effects. ♣♣♣





GAME OF THE MONTH

BIOSHOCK INFINITE

By Jason Buhrmester

• Fans have bemoaned the decision to relocate the beloved *BioShock* series from the failed underwater utopia of the first two games. Not to worry. Set in 1912, before the previous games, *BioShock Infinite* (360, PC, PS3) carries the steampunk-inspired aesthetics to Columbia, a government-created flying city gone rogue. Former detective Booker DeWitt, sent to retrieve a young girl, finds himself in a civil war and must fight his way out of the city using fun powers (throw fire!) and zooming around on a roller-coaster-like rail. Remarkable. **YYYY**



ALBUM OF THE MONTH

PUSH THE SKY AWAY

By Rob Tannenbaum

• Nick Cave's music is almost always described as poetic and dark. It's also hilarious: "She was a catch/ We were a match/I was the match that would fire up her snatch," he sings heatedly on *Push the Sky Away*, his new album (the limited deluxe release comes with a book, CD and DVD). If that's poetry, it's not the kind most of us learned in school.

With a stately baritone shaped

MUST-WATCH TV

SPIES, CAPERS AND MIDSEASON DRAMA

By Josef Adalian

• *Homeland* junkies suffering from adrenaline withdrawal will find plenty of thrills in a pair of new dramas now hitting the small screen. The better of the two is FX's *The Americans*, a late-Cold War period piece that imagines Keri Russell (left) and Matthew Rhys as married Soviet sleeper spies who have been embedded in suburban Washington, D.C. for nearly two decades. The Jenningses are a perfect all-American couple with two perfectly ordinary kids; they just happen to be deeply committed Communists willing to kill for their country. Set just after Ronald Reagan's first inauguration, with a new adminis-

tration determined to defeat the Reds for good, *The Americans* masterfully captures the overheated paranoia of the time. It also humanizes the bad guys: These Soviets love their children, and the balancing act between parenthood and serving the USSR sets the show apart from standard spy fare. No such subtlety burdens *Zero Hour*, an ABC caper in which Anthony Edwards finds himself trying to solve ancient mysteries in order to, you know, save the world. The first episode has Nazis, albinos, devil babies—and a final, jaw-dropping twist that may make you forget all the preceding silliness.



mostly by cigarettes and a love of Johnny Cash, Cave narrates tales of fleshly temptation as his longtime band the Bad Seeds, formed in 1983, play hushed, barbed prairie ballads. Yeah, the music is dark. But in the middle of a song about plague, oppression, murder and Lucifer, Cave spies tween queen Miley Cyrus, who seems to be enjoying herself. As is Cave. **YYYY**



The distance National Hurricane Center forecasts were off when tracking Hurricane Sandy:



MILES

Average hurricane-tracking error in 1970:

518 MILES

Scientists calculated a correlation between a country's chocolate consumption and its number of Nobel Prize winners:



CONSUMED PER PERSON PER YEAR EQUALS ONE ADDITIONAL NOBEL PRIZE.



Watching 90 minutes of a horror movie burns about

113 CALORIES

Scary workout: Put on *The Shining*, burn 184 calories.

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Amount paid at auction for a split moon rock weighing about 3.9 pounds, making it the fourth-largest piece of the moon ever publicly sold.



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9%

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20%
Silver



2%
Green



19%
Black



7%
Blue



CAR COLOR POPULARITY IN 2012

1 MILLION



Estimated value of Kate Moss's lower-back tattoo of small birds, done by painter Lucian Freud.



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UNION JACKED

MEET THE ASTON MARTIN VANQUISH, THE NEW BOSS OF BRITISH SPORTS CARS

• The British have an instinctive talent for looking stylish, even when it comes to flexing some muscle. Think Daniel Craig as James Bond in *Casino Royale*, taking on villains while decked out in his best tuxedo. Nobody dresses up raw power better than the U.K.'s storied luxury-auto brands: Aston Martin, Bentley, Rolls-Royce, Jaguar. What you see here: Aston's 2013 Vanquish. It's not every day the venerable sports-car purveyor unveils a new flagship, so we traveled across the pond to hammer this thing. On winding roads near the company's factory in Newport Pagnell, north of London, the sleek coupe slalomed and juked, briskly accelerating out of bends with a turbine-like rush of power. The 565-horsepower, six-liter V12 rumbles rather than screams, its sonic bursts somehow polite and understated compared with the roar of Italian sports cars. Although you can buy far more speed for far less money, the four-second sprints to 60 and the 183 mph top speed will turn your knuckles bridal-gown white. The interior is Savile Row sweet thanks to hand-stitched leather, and it's replete with technology, as you'd expect in a \$280,000 British automobile. That's the price of making muscle look this good.



1
LUXE LIFE
Dig the hand-stitched leather seats, touch-screen controls and Bang & Olufsen stereo.

2
POWER PLAY
The six-liter V12 delivers 565 horsepower and tops out at a bloody fast 183 mph.

3
HIGH DESIGN
With sweeping curves and razor edges, Aston's flagship is aggressive yet elegant.

4
BODYWORKS
The carbon-fiber body panels reduce weight while maintaining strength.



POETRY IN MOTION

A FEW WORDS WITH LEGENDARY CAR DESIGNER IAN CALLUM

• *The mind behind some of the great cars of our time, from Aston Martin to Jaguar (for which he is currently director of design), talks about his life in cars.*

Q: What are you thinking when you begin a design?

A: Cars need to have presence on the street because there's so much visual competition. My cars have to compete with Porsches and BMWs. In the U.S. they compete visually with Ford F-150 pickups. There needs to be an overt confidence.

Q: Did you have a eureka moment as a kid when you fell in love with automobiles?

A: At the age of four in my small town in Scotland, I saw a Porsche 356—a silver coupe. I can still see it in my mind. It was 1958 or 1959. I knew I wanted to be part of the world that made motorcars happen.

Q: Do you have an all-time favorite?

A: The 250 GT Short Wheelbase Ferrari. I discovered it as a teenager. I loved the beauty, but it was also powerful. If I could have one car, one road and one gallon of fuel, it would be the 250 SWB on roads in northwest Scotland, the most beautiful roads in the world.

STEALTH FIGHTERS

COPS HUNT FOR FLASHY SPORTS CARS. THESE RIDES ARE DELICIOUSLY FAST. AFFORDABLE AND UNDER THE RADAR (GUN)

HYUNDAI VELOSTER TURBO

• Nobody expects a Hyundai to be fast, but when the Veloster Turbo screams through the next intersection, it will turn you into a believer. At \$22,000, this 201-horsepower, 1.6-liter car may be the planet's cheapest pocket rocket.



When the Veloster Turbo screams through the next intersection, it will turn you into a believer.



FORD FOCUS ST

• Ford finally packed some muscle into the Focus. The new ST model, co-designed by Ford of Europe but built stateside, is a front-wheel-drive hatchback hauling a 252 hp four-banger. A 155 mph American-made car for less than \$24,000? Yes, please.



VOLKSWAGEN GTI

• The GTI, the first pint-size powerhouse, has been tearing up streets since 1983. The original had less than 100 hp. Today's GTI turns 200 hp out of a two-liter four-cylinder turbo, for \$24,000 and up. Watch for an all new GTI later this year.



FORD F-150 SVT RAPTOR

• The Raptor is our choice for the highest-performance pickup on road or off. It's built by Ford's Special Vehicle Team, which also turns out the 200 mph Shelby Mustang. The \$43,000 Raptor's 6.2-liter V8 cranks out 411 hp. This bird flies.

HOW TO BEAT THE HEAT

YOUR LUST FOR SPEED COULD COST YOU DEARLY. DON'T LET IT

01

RADAR LOVE

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02

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03

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FRANCOFILE

Talking With Mila Kunis

by James Franco

Mila Kunis first made a name for herself as Jackie, the delightful airhead on *That '70s Show*, but unlike most sitcom stars, she has been able to move successfully to the big screen. Her latest movie, *Oz: The Great and Powerful*, puts her in the role of an evil witch—not what you'd expect from *Esquire's* (and *Maxim's* and *GQ's*) Sexiest Woman Alive. She recently spent a day with her *Oz* co-star and *PLAYBOY* Contributing Editor James Franco to chat about paparazzi, Pilates and getting old.

FRANCO: Let's talk about *Oz* first. Was it hard to play such an ugly-looking creature?

KUNIS: That was the easy part. I'd never done a role that existed before, and it's probably the scariest one I've ever played. It's not like I'd ever play Theodora better than Margaret Hamilton. The only thing I could do was reinterpret it. I hope people appreciate it for what it is and don't compare it to what it was—because you can't.

FRANCO: I think they're two very different movies. You're fine.

KUNIS: I hope that's how people see it. I did have fun making it. Can I tell you I love Detroit? I could walk around. I had food outside. I don't remember the last time I ate outside. We went to the zoo. It was fantastic.

FRANCO: You can't go to the zoo in Los Angeles?

KUNIS: Dude, I can't leave my house in Los Angeles.

FRANCO: Because you'd be followed?

KUNIS: Yeah, there's no privacy. Every sweet, mundane moment you have in life is photographed. I always get

photographed in the morning, when I'm running errands or going to the gym, so in all the photos you see of me I'm in sweatpants because it's seven A.M. and I'm going to Pilates. I've now resorted to going to Pilates at six A.M. to see if I can beat the paparazzi.

FRANCO: They're just going where the money is, right? The magazines want to see you.

KUNIS: But you know me. Come on, I am the least exciting person to photograph daily.

FRANCO: You look good in some of them.

KUNIS: Fuck you! What do you mean "in some of them"?

FRANCO: You're not always in sweatpants is what I'm saying. Tell me this: How do you see things playing out in terms of your future and your career? What do you think you want to be?

KUNIS: I don't know. James, seriously, do you feel you could be an actor forever?

FRANCO: Yeah. Although, do you think it will get weird when you're older?

KUNIS: I think for a woman it does. There's a documentary you should see called *Searching for Debra Winger*, about how this industry affects women in their 30s. Realistically speaking, it's hard.

FRANCO: What happens, they age and people don't want them?

KUNIS: No, I think you have to choose. Do you want to have a life, or do you want to have a career? Sometimes you can find a happy medium, but in this industry it's rare.

FRANCO: What are the conflicts? Traveling so much? Is it hard to have a family?

KUNIS: All of the above. Everything.

You have to choose: privacy or career.

FRANCO: Why is that particular to women?

KUNIS: It's not necessarily particular to women, but in this documentary it is. I also think in this industry, age is

particular to women versus men. Why? Because that's just how it is.

FRANCO: You don't see yourself like Meryl Streep, working into your 60s?

KUNIS: Listen, I'd love to, but I wouldn't presume or assume to be that. If I'm lucky enough to have a career remotely close to hers, great. If I'm not, I'm not going with the expectation of having one, because that will ultimately slow me down. It's one in a million; it's not the reality.

FRANCO: But look at your career. Why would you think that? What would you do if you couldn't act?

KUNIS: I think a lot of it is luck. Don't get me wrong, I work my ass off. But so do a lot of people. It all depends on whether people care to see me in five years or not, and you can't predict that. It's weird that at the age of 29 I'm talking about aging in this industry, but the truth is I don't think I can do this for the rest of my life. I want to be a producer. That's really what I want, because I love this work in a weird, sick way. But I also want a life. I want a family—just, like, one day, not tomorrow.

FRANCO: And that means you'll stop acting as much?

KUNIS: As much, for sure. I want to be a present mom. When I was growing up both my mom and dad worked full-time. I guess the only thing I can say about that is they worked full-time in one location. I'm never in the same place for more than two months. How am I ever going to have a family like that? You have to make compromises. If that means I do one movie a year, if people still want to see me and hire me and I don't suck by that point, great. But my only source of happiness can't be dependent on something so fickle. And I find this industry to be incredibly fickle. ■

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WHO'S SORRY NOW?

BY JOEL STEIN

One of my greatest skills is apologizing. I do it not only well but constantly. When people bump into me on the street, I say, "I'm sorry." Right after "Take it" and "Good girl," my third-most-used sex-talk phrase is "Sorry about that." When housekeeping opens my hotel-room door, instead of just saying, "Can you come back later?" I go with "Sorry!" and then immediately follow it with "For being a privileged white male." I am the anti-Dominique Strauss-Kahn.

But most guys suck at saying sorry. Women are brilliant apologizers. That's because they're comfortable being submissive. Often, as soon as they realize they're wrong, they'll cry, throw in sex or, in cases when they've done something particularly awful, both. The performances are so impressive that we often root for women to screw up just to see them apologize. I have no doubt there are disturbing Japanese and German porn sites devoted to women saying they're sorry.

Part of the reason men are so bad at apologizing is that we never actually feel bad. In fact, we never apologize because we've done something wrong; we apologize because we got caught. Our brains justify all the ethical lapses we get away with: I have a right to lose money on poker since she spends it on clothes; a lap dance is to men what a massage is to women; Conan just wasn't getting the ratings.

Because we don't actually feel guilty and have no training in being subordinate, we apologize poorly. We make speeches that are 10 percent apology and 90 percent explanations for why we weren't really wrong. Any apology with

the word *but* or *because* in it is not an apology. Also, any apology delivered while you picture having sex with the woman you got caught having sex with is not an apology. You cannot feel truly sorry when you are shoring up the spank bank.

Men used to give great, deeply felt apologies, the kind samurais made with swords. That's because there's no simple "my bad" in an honor culture. If you were sorry for something, you could keep your honor, but you relinquished your power: no more running an army, no more complicated facial hair, just one wife. An apology was something taken so seriously that Fonzie—who lived in his own personal honor culture so intense he physically defended even his friends' friends, some of whom were Ralph Malph—could only stammer the first phoneme of the word *sorry*. Countries still operate this way. It took decades for the United States to apologize to Native Americans and to interned Japanese Americans. We probably won't apologize until 2050 for our 1970s decision to try the metric system.

But we now live in an honor-free culture, and in our softness, men have lowered the value of our freely given sorries, thereby greatly increasing the demand. The price of apologies drastically plummeted when the public apology became popular. Other than high treason, there is no offense for which a man should make a public apology. Apple CEO Tim Cook apologized so quickly for the Maps app fiasco in the new iPhone, all anyone could think was, That guy got beat up a lot as a kid. Justin Timberlake wrote a letter on his website apologizing for an offensive gag video about homeless people a friend of his had made for his

wedding, even though it wasn't actually shown at Timberlake's wedding and he never saw it. After my wedding, all I did was write e-mail apologies to my friends for not inviting more slutty single chicks.

All this sorriifying has fed into people's eagerness to play the role of morally superior scold, horrified that other people are not as pure as they are. This is why Tiger Woods stood at a podium and tearfully apologized to me when all he had done was entertain me with awesome sex stories. The only public apology I ever felt I actually deserved was from Anthony Weiner, since a man should always apologize for forcing another man to see his junk.

The word *sorry* has been devalued to *bummer*. Every time I tell a story in which something bad happens, someone interrupts with "Sorry." When I tell you someone died decades ago and you reflexively say "Sorry," what you're really saying is "I'm the omnipotent, omnipresent being who makes decisions on life and death, and I may have blown the one about your grandpa." In which case, you need to up your sorry to include some lightning, thunder and one of those Tupac-style holograms.

We have to cut down on the apologies and withstand the confrontation when we're not really sorry for what we did. Otherwise we're going to devalue the sorry to the point where it has no effect at all. And if there's any group that does such horrible things it needs to retain the power of the sorry, it's men. So let's save it for genocide, forgetting birthdays and not clearing our browser before our girlfriend sees our history. It's the only way we'll get anything done. ■

How to Outsmart a Millionaire

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I wasn't looking for trouble. I sat in a café, sipping my espresso and enjoying the quiet. Then it got noisy. Mr. Bigshot rolled up in a roaring high-performance Italian sports car, dropping attitude like his \$14,000 watch made it okay for him to be rude. That's when I decided to roll up my sleeves and teach him a lesson.

"Nice watch," I said, pointing to his and holding up mine. He nodded like we belonged to the same club. We did, but he literally paid 100 times more for his membership. Bigshot bragged about his five-figure purchase, a luxury heavyweight from the titan of high-priced timepieces. I told him that mine was the *Stauer Corso*, a 27-jewel automatic classic now available for only \$179. And just like that, the man was at a loss for words.

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It's an age-old question, a query pondered by mere mortals long before Harry met Sally: Can men and women be friends?

To that I respond with a resounding "Does Bear Grylls shit in the woods? Of course!" In fact, I have lots of male friends. They love to go shopping, they give me valuable fashion tips, and they always have great stories about getting sodomized by a famous closeted actor in a trendy nightclub bathroom. That's right—my male friends are gay. Gay, gay, gay, gay, gay! And that's why these friendships work, because there's no sexual tension whatsoever. In fact, the only time there's stress is when we show up somewhere wearing the same dress.

Now, am I friends with *straight* guys? Not anymore. Like all of you, my loyal readers, I've tried to take the "friends" route. I've attempted to be buddy-buddy with someone of the opposite sex for whom I had the proverbial hots. How did that work out? Well, let's just say, after about 10 minutes I wanted to jump on my "friend" like Kristen Stewart on an A-list director. So after taking stab after stab at being pals with guys who made me sweat like Ricky Martin at a Chick-fil-A, I've come to the conclusion that straight men and friendship are like Amanda Bynes and automobiles. Individually they're great, but put them together and there's going to be trouble.

Most of the time, being friends with someone of the opposite sex is a perfectly good waste of genitalia. Are there exceptions? Sure. Say a guy is completely repulsive, like the Elephant Man, Rocky Dennis from *Mash* or, even worse, the Situation. I could be friends with that. And it's the same for you men. No guy in history ever wanted to be friends with Halle Berry. That being said, some men still try to do it.

I don't blame them. Women make great friends. The problem is, most of the time the last thing you want to be with a woman is *friends*. In fact, friendships between men and women usually don't start out as friendships at all. They start out as you trying to get into her panties, and somewhere along the way, the botched sexual relationship turns into a friendship. This disastrous turn of events



BENJAMIN MARRA

BOSOM BUDDIES

is commonly known as entering the "friend zone," and we've all been there.

Now, as shallow and simple as men are, we women are even more devious and selfish. If we sense that you like us, we'll string you along, getting what we want without giving up the goods. I will admit that over the years I have been "friends" with guys because they took me to dinners, concerts, vacations and the occasional cockfight. Get in a situation like this and you'll be broker than Greece and the only female you'll get blown by is Hurricane Sandy.

If you insist on having an opposite-gender friend, here's my advice: Use the relationship to your advantage. Use your "friend" to meet other women. It's a proven fact that one of the best ways to get a girlfriend is to hang out with girls. If a woman sees other women are comfortable around you, she'll be more likely to want to get to know you. Before long, you'll have a binder full of women, like Mitt Romney. In fact, a good reference from a female friend will get a woman's bra off quicker than a lobster dinner and three appletinis.

Plus, sometimes girls are just more pleasant than the guys you pal around with. Be honest—other than your best friends, you'd totally rather hang out with chicks because they don't start fights or smell like stale farts and onions

or eat all the wings while you're taking a piss. Who would you rather spend a day at the beach with? The guys? No! After throwing the football around for 10 minutes, you'd rather be rubbing lotion on the girls while praying for a bikini nip slip. Just don't confuse a girl who's a friend for a girlfriend. Because believe me, *she* won't.

Generally speaking, however, most men can't be friends with a woman they're attracted to because, like it or not, we are all sexual beings. Spending too much time with someone of the opposite sex is like watching A-Rod in the playoffs—nerve-racking and frustrating. It's like putting food addicts in a room with an all-you-can-eat

buffet. Even if they're not hungry at that moment, it's just a matter of time before they're facedown in a tray of Swedish meatballs.

By Lisa Lampanelli

So, guys, if you can, stick to being friends with guys. Just like a woman needs a friend with whom she can share her dreams, her feelings and the name of her favorite vibrator, a guy needs a guy friend who will keep the ugly chick occupied while he hits on the good-looking one. Either that, or become friends with Chaz Bono. That's the best of both worlds. He can give you inside advice on women *and* tell you which is the best razor for heavy beards. Now that's what I call friendship! ■

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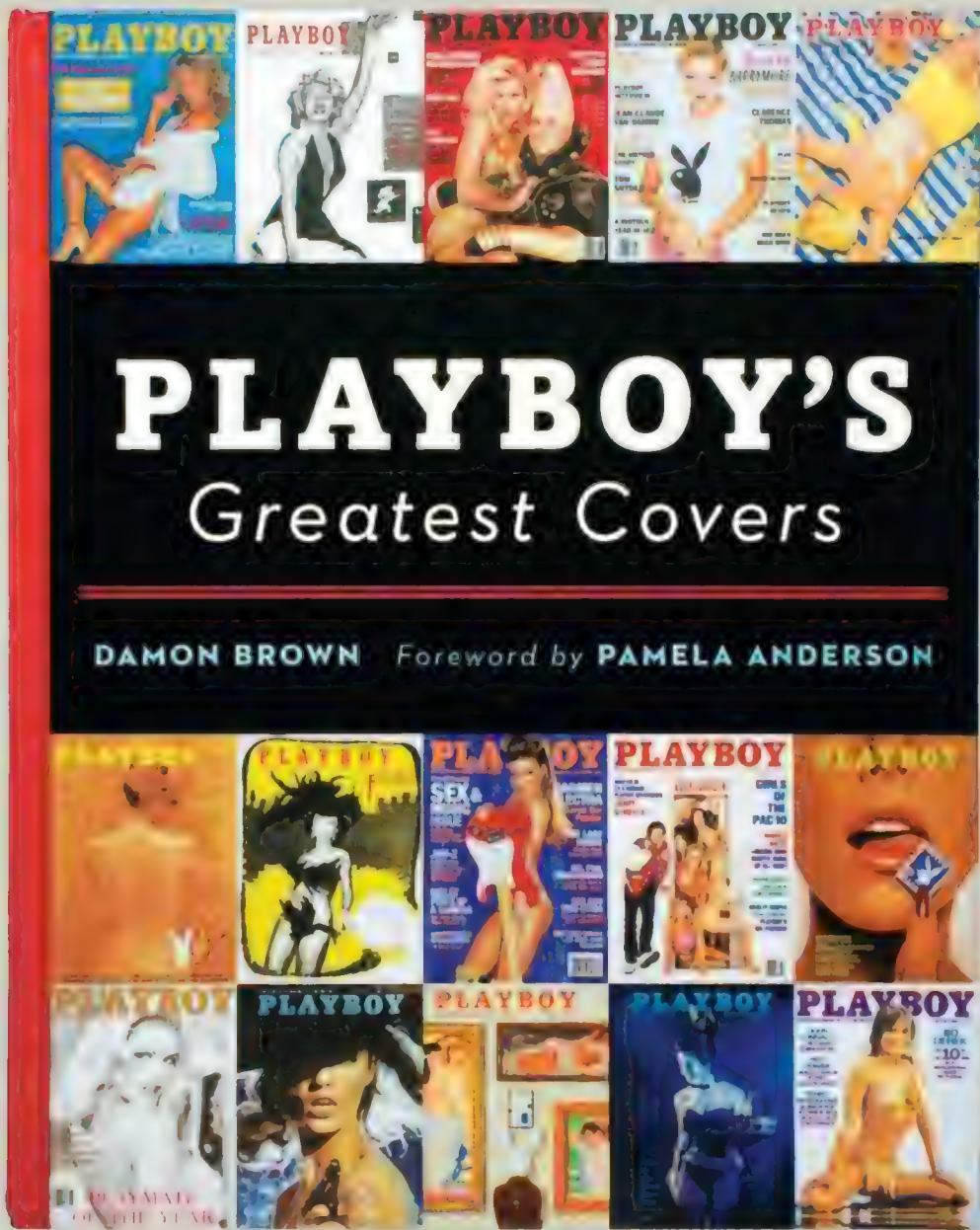
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A neighbor is letting me fuck his girlfriend. One night when the three of us were drinking, he told me she wanted to sleep with me and he was okay with it. I guess I'm weak, because I did. He works and she doesn't, and I think I fuck her more than he does. Should I be bothered by this? If it matters, I'm 46 and they're both 22.—J.L., Boston, Massachusetts

You're mistaken about which neighbor is letting you fuck her. You may feel a twinge of uncertainty about the arrangement because it's unusual, but from what you tell us, everyone is being honest. They have their relationship and you have your fun while it lasts. One possibility, of course, is that she decides she prefers you as a boyfriend. Would you be okay with her fucking the neighbor? You might have to be.

I want to buy a leather sofa, but every store has its own name for the best grade, just like mattresses. How can I be sure I'm getting quality leather?—R.G., Austin, Texas

It's difficult because there is no industry standard, so one manufacturer's C may be another's 2. Regardless of how salespeople describe leathers (e.g., "grade A" or "grade 1,000"), the key is their ability to explain the differences. There are a few terms you should be familiar with. "Top grain" or "full grade" indicates the leather comes from the outermost layer of hide, meaning it is the most durable and natural looking. "Split" leathers come from beneath the hide and are less expensive but also less flexible and more likely to eventually crack. "Aniline" leather has not been treated with color, so it looks and feels great but is the least resistant to stains and fading. "Semi-aniline" means the leather has been dyed but not enough to hide its natural characteristics. "Pigmented" leather has a color coat that may be stamped to give it texture. "Corrected" means the leather has been sanded or buffed. "Full grain" is sometimes used as a synonym for "top grain" or to indicate top grain that hasn't been corrected. If you correct full-grain leather on only one side, you get nubuck. If you correct split leather, you get suede. If you correct a person who is wearing leather, you get kink.

My husband is an avid pot smoker. His smoking doesn't interfere with our daily lives, but I don't think he should be stoned all the time. In fact, he has to smoke a bat before we have sex. I'm offended that he needs something extra

PLAYBOY ADVISOR



I fantasize about being dominated like a pony. My boyfriend doesn't quite get the fantasy, but he's game. Where do I start?—J.W., Las Vegas, Nevada

*On all fours, we suppose (though human ponies can also stand). "Pony play" is a relatively common interest among the BDSM crowd, so it's not difficult to find a herd. Check out thehumanponyregistry.org, or pick up the essential guide *The Human Pony: A Handbook for Owners, Trainers and Admirers*, by Rebecca Wilcox. As your trainer, your boyfriend will need tack (including bit, bridle, saddle, harness and reins) and a lead line. He can also make use of a whip, restraints, spurs, blinkers, a grooming brush and possibly a chastity belt "to prevent other animals from molesting the pony," as Wilcox puts it. A tail can be strapped on or attached to a butt plug. Shoes can be slipped into fake hooves for an authentic clop-clop sound. If you are a cart pony, you will need a cart. Once you have agreed on a safe word that will put a stop to the game if you become uncomfortable, sow your wild oats—and maybe eat some, if you're good.*

to make love to me, but he says I'm being too sensitive. Am I wrong to ask that he smoke only on weekends?—T.D., Morristown, New Jersey

We don't think so, but good luck. A guy who is perpetually stoned on any drug has a problem; by one estimate about 10 percent of marijuana smokers are seriously hooked. If your husband's habit affects your sex life, it affects your daily life, so don't kid yourself. It's ironic that he tokes before sex, because the latest research suggests weed crimps sexual

response in men. A team of scientists in Canada and Egypt reports that cannabis receptors may be located not only in the brain but also in the penis. This means every joint is passed from a guy to his dick, and if there's one thing you don't want junior to be during sex, it's baked. Presented with this finding, your husband may understand why you are reluctant and perhaps decline to have sex when he's high. For the record, experienced swingers rarely drink or toke before an orgy. You can smoke a joint anytime, but how many chances do you get to have your joint smoked?

My husband and I have been married for 12 years. If we go more than two days without having sex, he starts what I call "the countdown," announcing how many days it has been. I enjoy sex but not every day or even every other day. He is also an octopus—he won't keep his hands off me, even when I'm asleep. After he wakes me up, he acts as though he doesn't know why I'm angry. He also talks dirty to me all the time. I appreciate that he wants me, but it's getting on my nerves. Do you have any advice?—A.P., Gastonia, North Carolina

You can change this situation in 10 minutes a day. When your husband begins the countdown, fondles you, talks dirty, feels you up in bed or makes any indication he is fantasizing about you, give him a hand job. No excuses, no exceptions. This will quiet him down. Consider his plight: He feels horny (for you—that's not a situation to "appreciate" but to celebrate), but nine times out of 10 he is frustrated. He can masturbate, but that's almost like torture, given that he's living with a siren. All he can do is pursue the prize, even if his technique is clumsy. It will take five minutes (less if you enjoy yourself and/or talk dirty to him and lift your shirt), maybe twice a day, and it can take place anywhere in the house or elsewhere, depending on your taste for adventure. Also, when you feel

horny and want a quickie or extended attention in return, he'll have no excuses. (We can already hear the objections from some readers that we're asking you to "service" your husband. Well, yes. Waiting until you're both in the mood isn't working. And if he's going to be serviced, who else would you prefer do it? This recommendation also applies when the woman has the higher sex drive.)

In November the word *deserve* appears twice, once when a reader asks, "How

do I get the blow jobs I deserve?" and again when the Advisor writes in a response to a different question, "You certainly deserve a better sex life." But do we, as individuals, deserve sex? I once complained to a female friend that because my internet connection was down, I couldn't look at naked women. I was half joking, but she replied, "You say that like you deserve to look at naked women. You don't deserve to look at naked women. You don't deserve shit." Since then, especially when it comes to sex, I question the difference between desire, need and deserve. Let's say I deserve a blow job—then what? Does that mean somebody deserves to give it to me?—D.G., Houston, Texas

"Deserve" is defined as having qualities worthy of reward. When it comes to sex, being human is that quality. Every person deserves a great sex life, which includes a right to comprehensive sex education and equal gender rights. That doesn't mean you deserve a blow job or to see naked women online in the sense that you "earned" it—just that you shouldn't be denied the opportunity to be sexual by a friend, religious leader or anyone else who insists it's "wrong" or "dirty." They can decide that for themselves but not for you.

I have a few scarves but am not sure how to tie one correctly. Also, I see some men wearing them outside their coats, while others keep them inside. Is there casual or formal scarf etiquette?—T.R., Novi, Michigan

A scarf serves the same function as a tie or a pocket square by adding color and personality to an otherwise straightforward overcoat or jacket—except that, unlike a tie or pocket square, it keeps your nipples warm. Wrap the scarf as tightly as the weather requires, tuck it into your jacket or coat and be on your way.

Is it possible for two brown-eyed people to have a blue-eyed child?—L.R., Omaha, Nebraska

Yes. It's not evidence of cheating, though two blue-eyed people who have a brown-eyed child would be suspicious. (We qualify that because the genetics behind eye color is not fully understood, and many newborns have blue eyes that later darken.) We inherit an eye-color gene from each parent. Brown is dominant, so if you happen to get a brown gene from Dad and a blue gene from Mom, you will have brown eyes. If you and your partner both have a brown-blue combo, your child could inherit the recessive blue gene from both of you and have blue eyes. A third gene accounts for green, and others play a role in hazel, gray and black.

My girlfriend would like to hire a gigolo. She will be traveling to Las Vegas for business. Are there any services there? We would also like to locate an arrangement closer to home.—S.S., Cleveland, Ohio

Brothels in Nevada have experimented with adding studs to their menus, but none of them

lasted more than a few months due to lack of clients. However, agencies such as Cowboys 4 Angels (cowboys4angels.com) provide dates in Vegas, as well as Los Angeles, San Francisco, New York, Dallas, Orlando and south Florida. They walk the same fine legal line as female escorts—you don't pay for sex, only "companionship" that may include sex. Capisce? Prices start at \$300 per hour. Finding a pro in Cleveland will be more of a challenge. You can search online, but the listings seem dicey. ("Available to eat pussy and flip hoes—no disrespect.") If you're both turned on by your girlfriend being with another guy, it might be more productive and less pricey to visit a swing club such as Escape or Club Eros, or search by location at sites such as adultfriendfinder.com and socialsex.com.

Are we all getting dumber? The December column makes me think so. A man wonders what type of penis a woman is attracted to. Ask the woman! An online relationship with a woman in Mexico? Have her visit as a tourist. If you don't like her, send her back. Not your issue! How old is the kid who cannot figure out how to prepare his car for a cross-country trip? Left out of a threesome? Do a better job making the women happy! The woman you love is married to your best friend? Grow some balls and tell her! No wonder Obama was reelected. Nobody can think on his own.—C.W., Cedar Rapids, Iowa

You're overlooking an important fact: No one asked for your advice.

I have a fetish: I am turned on by watching a couple fuck when both people are enjoying themselves and showing tenderness and affection. This is the antithesis of everything I can find online. All the hard-core porn is male-centric; the guy thrusts rapid-fire as soon as he enters the woman, and her moans are fake and unrelated to anything actually happening in her body. Where is the porn featuring real couples in love with each other or, if not in love, at least having fun and doing what most folks do when they fuck in real life? I've never had sex that came close to resembling what I've seen in porn.—M.K., Cincinnati, Ohio

Of course not. Porn is fantasy—typically that of the (male) director. The ubiquitous nature of hard-core online, especially when seen by young people who have little or no experience with a partner, is causing many people to question its effect on our collective sexual health. Porn films have been around for decades, of course, but only now have they become so readily available that they are filling the vacuum created by our aversion to sex education. Former advertising executive Cindy Gallop raised an alarm in 2009 after she noticed a number of the younger men she'd slept with seemed to have learned their moves from porn, including asking to come on her face—an almost universal tableau in hardcore and the type of request that leads many

*women to wonder if they're starring in an adult movie running in their partner's head. Gallop launched a site, makelovenotporn.com, to argue her case. In 2011 she followed up with an e-book, *Make Love, Not Porn: Technology's Hardcore Impact on Human Behavior*. Most recently, she created the website makelovenotporn.tv, which will host videos made by couples as they have distinctly warm, sensual, connected sex. Gallop insists she isn't antiporn; she watches it, but like you, she has a hard time finding anything she likes. In the meantime she is happily "rehabilitating and reeducating" the pornified men she sleeps with, which reminds us why we love predigital women.*

While dining at a steakhouse, I was faced with the dilemma of what to do with a piece of gristle. I was taught as a child that you should discreetly wipe your mouth and deposit the offending piece into your napkin. But when I returned from the restroom, the waiter was refolding my napkin. I was embarrassed to think he discovered the bite. What is the best way to handle this?—D.K., Atlanta, Georgia

Remove the gristle discreetly with your fork or napkin, or by cupping your hand over your mouth, and place it on your plate. It's not wrong to leave it in the napkin—a steakhouse server has seen it before—but it puts your napkin out of commission.

In October a reader wrote that he masturbated into a glass with a lipstick print on it. I have a somewhat similar situation. I am 25 but have spent only six months out of prison since I was 13, so my life experience is limited. Several of my female pen pals have, at my request, put lipstick on their labia and sent me a pussy print. (Most prisons don't allow inmates to receive nude images, so this feels like the best I'm going to get.) After I get the print, I masturbate to it. The turn-on is knowing that if I were free the woman would fuck me. I've even placed my tongue against the prints because the lipstick had been on her pussy. Is this too extreme?—M.R., Miami, Florida

It's certainly kinky and, given your circumstances, almost romantic (or commercial; we envision a line of holiday cards). We hope you can turn things around and someday enjoy a pussy print on your face.

All reasonable questions—from fashion, food and drink, stereos and sports cars to dating dilemmas, taste and etiquette—will be personally answered if the writer includes a self-addressed, stamped envelope. The most interesting, pertinent questions will be presented in these pages. Write the Playboy Advisor, 9346 Civic Center Drive, Beverly Hills, California 90210, or e-mail advisor@playboy.com. For updates, follow [@playboyadvisor](https://twitter.com/playboyadvisor) on Twitter.





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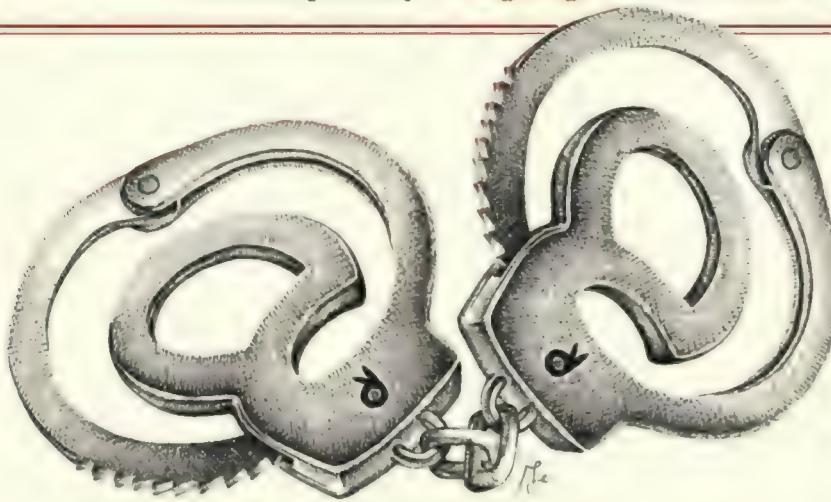
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E-SEARCHES AND E-SEIZURES

The government has been increasing its control over social media and the internet. It's time to do something about it

Does the Fourth Amendment protect us from warrantless government searches? It's supposed to, but in some cases it doesn't. One of the most amazing details to come out of last year's *l'affaire* Petraeus—when the director of the Central Intelligence Agency was forced to resign after his extramarital affair was revealed through e-mails obtained by an overzealous FBI agent—is the ease with which law enforcement agencies can access anybody's private online information. It's surprising how quickly Google and other internet service providers will give up information to investigators. But that's not the fault of Google or the ISPs—that's just how the law works.

If the feds want to search your basement, read your mail or tap your phones, they have to go through a process designed to protect your con-

stitutional rights. But in the realm of electronic communications, investigators needn't consider those rights. They are not required to establish probable cause or appear before a judge in order to obtain a search warrant. That means your e-mails,

texts, Facebook messages and Dropbox files can all easily be accessed by a nosy investigator.

E-mail providers such as Google and Yahoo may turn over messages older than six months if authorities obtain a subpoena, which doesn't require a judge's signature, rather than a search warrant, which does need court approval. The government isn't even required to let

you know if it has obtained your e-mail with a search warrant.

This is partly because electronic privacy law—which essentially remains defined by 1986's Electronic Communications Privacy Act—hasn't kept pace with technology. Back in the

Your e-mails, texts, Facebook messages and Dropbox files can easily be accessed by investigators.

READER RESPONSE

FREE MARKET RULES

The commentary by Jackson Lears on the economic theories of John Maynard Keynes ("We're All Animals," November) perpetuates the myth that the housing collapse was a failure of the free market. President Clinton embarked on a policy that promoted home ownership for anyone with a pulse, and his attorney general, Janet Reno, enforced it with threats of statistical discrimination against recalcitrant lenders. Yet even that couldn't coerce enough lenders to make no-income,



no-job (NINJA) loans, because holding the loans would destroy the institution and no investor was big, dumb and rich enough to buy them. A free market would have shut down this absurd scheme. Enter the nanny state in the form of Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac to circumvent market discipline and give the imprimatur of legitimacy to mountains of NINJA loans, all



READER RESPONSE

funded by the American taxpayer. In 2003 Representative Barney Frank was vigorously defending this scheme, and Senator Chris Dodd assured us that Fannie and Freddie would always be sound. I'm confident the nanny state will manage our health care and energy programs with the same wisdom.

Tim Stein
Punta Gorda, Florida

So you bastards are Keynesians. I don't know what economy—or world—you live in, but no one in the U.S. is arguing that "only austerity can save us now." Our deficit and debt have grown by



leaps and bounds, and welfare and warfare are skyrocketing, yet PLAYBOY seems to believe we're cutting back. You also seem to think more government spending will end the recession. But FDR's First and Second New Deals and even World War II did jack-shit to end the Great Depression, which lasted for 20 years.

Evan Rogers
Dublin, Ohio

Your pale homage to Keynes rings false to anyone with a modicum of macroeconomic understanding. Keynesianism got us into this mess. I've heard all the insinuations about how the Great Depression followed that 1920s, Republican-wrought



GENERAL DAVID PETRAEUS: SOMEONE COULD BE MONITORING YOUR GMAIL ACCOUNT.

1980s, most people didn't keep electronic communications for long, so six months seemed a reasonable protection. Now, of course, such information lives forever in the cloud.

In 2010 the Sixth Circuit Court of Appeals in Cincinnati ruled that users would have the same reasonable expectation of privacy in their stored e-mails that they do with their mail or phone calls and that the government must obtain a search warrant before seizing e-mails. Which means, essentially, that the ECPA is unconstitutional.

Last November, the Senate Judiciary Committee approved a measure that would require investigators to obtain a search warrant before they could review any e-mails. And the proposed amendment to the ECPA would ob-

lige officials to notify you within 10 days of obtaining a warrant, unless a special dispensation had been granted by the court.

Investigators don't like this amendment, naturally. They contend that such protection—it takes longer to get a search warrant than it does to get a subpoena—would hinder their ability to go after criminals. But the amendment would leave intact the counterterrorism provisions of the Patriot Act.

With a little luck the measure will make it through the Senate sometime this year. Maybe it will even become the law of the land. Until then, be careful what you write. ■

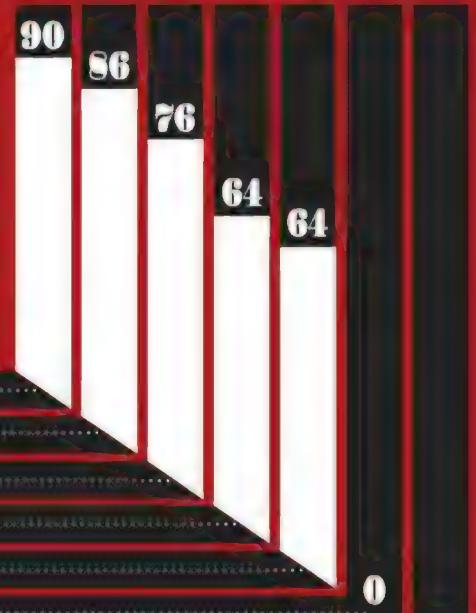
GIVING IT UP

% Google compliance

How often does Google hand over online info?

Government agencies and courts around the world ask Google for users' online data. Below are seven nations and the number of requests Google received from each during the first half of 2012, along with the percentage of those requests the company honored. The high rate of compliance in the U.S. suggests the requests were made in accordance with federal law.

COUNTRY	# OF REQUESTS
USA	7,969
JAPAN	104
BRAZIL	1,566
UNITED KINGDOM	1,425
INDIA	2,319
HUNGARY	92
RUSSIA	58





READER RESPONSE

period of prosperity and social progress and must therefore be a consequence of it. But it would have remained an ordinary recession had FDR, his New Deal and the Smoot-Hawley Tariff not gotten hold of it.

Berry Muhl
Houston, Texas

ONE DRINK, TWO STRAWS

Human liberty, as defined by Melba Newsome ("Hands Off My Big Gulp," October), is the freedom to purchase the precisely calibrated quantity of salt, sugar and fat that corporations have calculated will render their products most addictive to consumers while incidentally killing them. She defends this freedom of lab rats to demand their preferred brand of doped sugar water with the



THE MAN'S BEST FRIEND

Drug-sniffing dogs often make mistakes

BY TYLER TRYKOWSKI

On June 24, 2006, Deputy Sheriff William Wheetley pulled over Clayton Harris in Liberty County, Florida for having expired tags on his truck. Harris was shaky and agitated; an open beer in his cup holder didn't aid his case. Wheetley deployed his drug-detection dog, Aldo, for an open-air sniff around the vehicle. The dog "alerted," which was enough cause for a search. The officer found 200 pseudoephedrine pills, 8,000 matches and other ingredients for cooking meth under Harris's seats.

The case would have been open-and-shut if Aldo were trained to detect the scent of matches and Sudafed, but he wasn't. Aldo may have alerted to residual odors, but dogs can't be cross-examined, and no illegal drugs were found on Harris's person. The state of Florida's appeal of the suppression of evidence based on this fact has made it all the way to the Supreme Court, where oral arguments in *Florida v. Harris* were heard in October.

Historically, courts have upheld the right of police to use drug dogs, but there are no national regulations for their training or reliability. Although dogs are required to be "trained" and "certified," those terms vary widely. For example, U.S. Customs uses a rigorous 12-week training course that requires dogs to demonstrate 100 percent accuracy to pass and graduates only half its canine candidates; the United States Police Canine Association requires 70 percent accuracy, and the National Police Canine Association requires only that dogs find three of four "hides" to pass certification. Other programs provide no certification standards,

Dogs may have been trained to operate as "trick ponies," providing false alerts via handler cues.

simply graduating dogs that "pass."

Research shows that even with training drug dogs can be remarkably inaccurate: Studies from the *Chicago Tribune*, the University of California, Davis and the Australian government have found that currently operating canines have false alert rates of 56 percent, 85.5 percent and 79.8 percent, respectively. These results were consistent over time and mirror situations encountered by police departments daily.

Then there are dogs that aren't trained to detect drugs at all: Nevada state troopers filed a lawsuit last June alleging their dogs were being trained to operate as "trick ponies," providing false alerts via handler cues to facilitate illegal searches and seizures of property (including money).

During oral arguments in the *Harris* case, Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia asked, "What are the incentives here? Why would a police department want to use an incompetent dog?" It would seem so-called incompetent dogs provide all the incentive potentially corrupt police need. ■

in the *Harris* case, Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia asked, "What are the incentives here? Why would a police department want to use an incompetent dog?" It would seem so-called incompetent dogs provide all the incentive potentially corrupt police need. ■

enthusiasm of someone refighting the Battle of Lexington and Concord. Thanks, libertarians! If only Newsome had been around when Upton Sinclair wrote *The Jungle*. She could have fought to preserve our choice to eat tubercular beef and rat droppings. Damn those nannies at the FDA who took away our freedom.

Andrew Christie
Cambria, California

It is interesting to see all the letters calling for gun control in response to the June feature



READER RESPONSE

Armed and Dangerous? adjacent to a commentary decrying a government attempt to regulate the size of sodas. Newsome argues that when "government starts to ban things it deems bad for us, it is protecting us from our choices." That's exactly my argument against gun control. I can make my own decisions about Big Gulps and firearms. It is foolhardy to relinquish our personal liberties in the name of the "public good."

Ronald Delgado
Tampa, Florida

ENTANGLED IN WEED

The November *Raw Data* cites a statistic claiming \$2.4 billion to \$6.2 billion in tax revenue would be generated if marijuana were legalized. Has



anyone done an estimate of the costs in human misery, ruined lives and other "benefits" of legalization as untold millions of the legal pot smokers advance to harder drugs?

Carl McGlothlin
Pollock Pines, California

Prohibitionists have long made this "gateway" argument, but given the millions of people who have smoked weed and not become addicted to heroin, it seems spurious. That said, a new study by researchers at Yale University finds that the use of alcohol, cigarettes and marijuana by

PORN POLICE

How do you force actors to wear condoms?

BY NORA O'DONNELL

Last November Los Angeles County voters passed Measure B, which requires condom use on the sets of porn films. Wearing a condom, advocates argued, is common sense. But how will the measure be enforced? Public health officials don't have a rule book for strong-arming penises into prophylactics, and they're unwilling to comment until they've had more time to figure out how to

approach the issue. Will government workers drop by sets for surprise inspections? Or will they seize early cuts of *Missionary Position Impossible: Ghost Protocol* and view them for violations? Activists behind the law say that's a possibility. "This is no different than supervising restaurants or nail salons or barbershops," Michael Weinstein, co-founder of the AIDS Healthcare Foundation, told the Associated Press. "You fill out forms, you are granted a permit, and periodically somebody goes out and does spot inspections." Will these spot inspections include penis checks? Porn stars have their doubts, but if it comes to that, they could pack their bags and head to a more welcoming county or state. Or the industry could stay and new government jobs (paid for by the cost of health permits) would be created. It's possible some women—and men—might enjoy work as professional penis inspectors. ■

AMMO NATION

Does the Second Amendment protect bullets?

More than a century of legal decisions has created a delicate balance—or a stalemate, depending on your level of cynicism—between gun rights and gun controls. But what about ammunition? Do bullets qualify as arms? They're harmless in isolation, while an empty gun is at least useful as a bluff or a bludgeon.

Gun-control advocates have been chasing bullets for decades, calling them "the actual agent of harm." The cause found its champion 20 years ago in Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan of New York, who liked to tweak the National Rifle Association with the mantra "Guns don't kill people, bullets kill people." Although there was a precedent for restricting the most destructive bullets (the Law Enforcement Officers Protection Act of 1985 banned armor-piercing ammo), Moynihan instead proposed taxing handgun bullets into scarcity, framing the issue as a public-health policy akin to taxing cigarettes.

Moynihan's 1993 proposal would have raised the tax on the wholesale price of most handgun bullets from 11 percent to 50 percent. (He excluded ammo designed for hunting and target practice.) For example, the tax on a box of 50 high-grade .38-caliber cartridges would have risen from \$1.20 to \$5.90, a significant but relatively modest increase. However, .50-caliber ammo and "hyper-bullets" would be nailed with a 10,000 percent tax increase. As a result, the cost of a box of 20 Winchester nine-millimeter hollow-point Black Talons

would jump overnight from \$15 to \$1,515.

The comedian Chris Rock worked the idea back into the conversation in 1999 with a routine in which he noted, "If a bullet cost \$5,000, there'd be no more innocent bystanders." Last year Toni Preckwinkle, board president of Cook County, Illinois, which includes Chicago, proposed a more modest increase of a nickel per bullet in an effort to raise an estimated \$400,000 in annual revenue and potentially reduce urban violence. The NRA threatened to sue. She couldn't get enough board support and dropped the idea.

At least two courts—in different centuries—have not dodged bullets when considering the Second Amendment. In 1871 the Tennessee Supreme Court agreed with three men who argued that a state ban on concealed handguns violated the Constitution. The right to bear arms, the court noted, "necessarily" includes the right to "purchase and provide ammunition suitable for such arms." In 2010 the D.C. Court of Appeals said the same thing, throwing out the conviction of a man charged with possession of handgun bullets in his home, which the district had banned. It concluded that a 2008 Supreme Court decision, *District of Columbia v. Heller*, which affirmed a homeowner's constitutional right to defend himself with a gun, implies that the gun is loaded.

Bullets are taking fire lately from another direction. Last year a coalition of environmental groups organized by the Center for Biological Diversity asked the Environmental Protection Agency to ban lead ammunition, claiming that 83,000 tons of shot left on the ground each year by hunters and target shooters poison as many as 20 million birds. The Fish and Wildlife Service long ago banned lead shot for hunting waterfowl. —Chip Rowe





READER RESPONSE

men ages 18 to 25 is associated with an increased likelihood that they will abuse prescription drugs. We could easily solve that problem, of course, by banning alcohol and cigarettes.

Despite the best efforts of the federal government and the morality police, marijuana has been part of the American experience for generations ("Legalize It!", November). Consumers have voted with their dollars. Legalize weed and add a sales tax. The revenue will more than cover the costs of abuse, help balance budgets, reduce debt and pay for essential services.

Larry Penner
Great Neck, New York

Our Corporate Masters

GOLD IN DISDAIN

Corporations often profit immensely from the misfortune of others

BY BRIAN COOK

As Hurricane Sandy pounded lower Manhattan last October—flooding its streets and leaving most residents without electricity—a photo made the rounds on Twitter. Taken about the same time the emergency generators were failing at NYU Langone Medical Center, the image shows a blacked-out city with one building, the headquarters of Goldman Sachs, remaining incongruously bright. In context the building appears like a defiantly shining middle finger, untroubled by forces that left so many around it (literally) powerless.

Goldman Sachs has made a habit of remaining untroubled as others around it are battered. During the most frenzied period of the housing-market bubble, the investment bank persuaded hedge funds, municipalities and pension funds to invest in complex financial instruments based on mortgages (many

of them subprime) it considered worthless. Goldman then turned around and bet against its own instruments, largely through the insurance giant AIG. When the feds were forced to bail out AIG with an initial \$85 billion, about 15 percent of that money went to settling the company's losing bets with Goldman Sachs. AIG was far from the only entity Goldman played. A partial list of government groups, pension funds and private companies that either are suing or have settled lawsuits against the bank for selling toxic crap includes the Securities and Exchange Commission (which received a \$550 million settlement in 2010); the pension funds for Mississippi public employees and Arkansas teachers; the West Virginia Investment Management Board; the city of Reno, Nevada; and German lenders Bayerische Landesbank, DZ Bank and IKB Deutsche Industriebank. The list goes on.

With all that bitterness and wealth destruction in its wake, it's perhaps no surprise Goldman has seen its profits more than halved since reaching record highs during the two-year period of 2009 to 2010. Last year the company had to let 1,600 employees go (about five percent of its workforce).

But don't cry for Goldman Sachs. The firm's chairman, Lloyd Blankfein, went on TV to call for cuts in Medicaid and Social Security, while advocating for tax breaks so his company wouldn't have to pay U.S. income tax on its foreign earnings. Blankfein's firm, which turned a cool \$1.5 billion profit in last year's third quarter, would have gone out of business if not for a \$10 billion federal handout back in 2008. ■

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PLAYBOY INTERVIEW: JIMMY KIMMEL

A candid conversation with the affable talk show host about the new late-night wars, having nerves of steel and the enduring humor of Matt Damon

When *Jimmy Kimmel Live* debuted on January 26, 2003—on the heels of Super Bowl XXXVII and prefaced by a joking warning to viewers from anchor eminence Ted Koppel to expect “no special post-Super Bowl edition of *Nightline* tonight so that ABC can bring you the following piece of garbage”—not many people thought the show would survive a year. “Welcome to Enjoy It While It Lasts, my new talk show,” said Jimmy Kimmel that first broadcast. The young midnight upstart, who followed *Nightline* on ABC until *Nightline* was relegated to following him earlier this year, is now fully engaged in a head-on battle at 11:35 P.M. with his late-night elders, NBC’s Jay Leno and CBS’s David Letterman. *JKL*’s dependably okay ratings—which, in fact, have spiked in recent years—have less to do with the seismic move than with the show’s lure of advertiser-treasured 18- to 49-year-olds, exceeding even that of the other, younger Jimmy (Fallon) on NBC.

At 45 and 20 pounds slimmer than in 2003, the Brooklyn-born, Las Vegas-raised Kimmel has slowly reshaped his longtime low-brow image—a residual effect of four years of co-presiding over Comedy Central’s *The Man Show* (itself a culmination of his earlier radio shock-jockeying)—into a talent worthy of playing in the majors. His rise has been slow but

steady, based on his willingness to take chances and exploit social media. The *JKL* online viral music-video sensations “I’m Fucking Matt Damon” (perpetrated by Kimmel’s then inamorata Sarah Silverman) and the tit-for-tat “I’m Fucking Ben Affleck” begat *A-list* intrigue that has resulted in the show’s steady stream of elaborately produced comic videos featuring the likes of Harrison Ford, Meryl Streep, Tom Cruise, Tom Hanks, Oprah Winfrey and even first lady Michelle Obama. Last year alone he hosted both the White House Correspondents’ Dinner and the Emmys; he also became engaged to *JKL* co-head writer Molly McNearney (he has two grown children from his first marriage), and in the realm of dreams-come-true, he finally welcomed onto his show his lifelong idol David Letterman.

PLAYBOY dispatched journalist Bill Zehme—an expert on the world of late-night talk shows who has spent time with and written about Letterman, Leno and Johnny Carson, and who profiled Kimmel for PLAYBOY in 2007—to the host’s Hollywood Hills home to make him sit and think about what he’s done. Zehme reports: “Jimmy Kimmel embodies more of, well, everything than anyone I’ve known—the expansive generosity, the reflexive candor, the profound thoughtfulness, plus he cooks like a four-star chef. He gave up the bulk of his

birthday weekend for our many hours of sessions, even whipping up an incomparably fine frittata during the process. Once, as we sat by his pool, he spied a few giant hawks majestically gliding above our heads and briefly recoiled before magnanimously giving them their due: ‘Look at those motherfuckers,’ he said, squirming. ‘But they’re awesome too—because they eat fuckin’ rats, so I have to love ‘em.’”

PLAYBOY: Let’s begin by mentioning your nightly trademark *Jimmy Kimmel Live* sign-off, when you apologize to Matt Damon for bumping him due to time constraints. This interview, it turns out, had to be bumped one issue because Matt Damon was locked into doing it last issue. Can you accept our apologies?

KIMMEL: Well, isn’t that beautifully ironic? But the good news is Matt Damon won’t ever know about this because he doesn’t read PLAYBOY for the articles; he reads it purely to masturbate. So I actually feel okay with it.

PLAYBOY: Where did that sign-off come from?

KIMMEL: Out of sheer desperation—just self-deprecating sarcasm that was the result of having mostly C- and D-level guests on the show. The night I first



“People believed I was some kind of cross between Andrew Dice Clay and one of those windup penises that hop across desktops. That was never me. That was *The Man Show*. I think the perception of me is more accurate now.”

“I don’t have the qualities you need to be phony, which is a huge drawback in show business. I never had any option other than to be myself. I’m a guy who’s not particularly handsome or well-spoken; I’m just kind of a funny guy.”

“I would never date someone I’m convinced wouldn’t have dated me when I was in high school. I’m not that kind of guy. I want to be loved for who I am, not for what I do for a living.”

said it was toward the end of our third year. I wish I could remember who the guests were, but they weren't just C-level guests; they were particularly low-rent, so unremarkable that I was feeling ashamed of myself by the end of the hour. As a joke I said, "Apologies to Matt Damon; we ran out of time." He happened to be the first A-plus-list guest that popped into my head. Our co-executive producer Jason Schrift immediately doubled over laughing, which made me much happier than I'd been. So I just kept doing it to amuse Schrift, really. I never imagined anyone was actually still watching us at the end of the show, much less that Matt Damon would get wind of it and it would become this big thing. What's even weirder is that the studio audience still laughs at it every single night. I don't know if there's ever been a joke told practically verbatim so many times on television that keeps getting laughs. It's taken on a life of its own.

PLAYBOY: Do you remember the first reaction you got from Damon?

KIMMEL: His publicist told us he thought it was funny and that people were constantly mentioning it to him on the street. As a result, we can't just have him on as a normal guest. It now has to be something spectacular, like his video with Sarah, "I'm Fucking Matt Damon." He has appeared probably five or six times but always in the context of a bit that grudgingly relates to not having time for him.

PLAYBOY: How much of you is the same guy who started this show 10 years ago?

KIMMEL: One hundred percent.

PLAYBOY: Really? You do know that the perception of who you are has changed considerably.

KIMMEL: Well, I think the perception of me is more accurate now. Back then, people believed I was some kind of cross between Andrew Dice Clay and one of those windup penises that hop across desktops. That was never me. That was the conceit of *The Man Show*—which was designed as a satire of irresponsible male stupidity and instead became a magnet for a huge segment of dopey guys who didn't understand we were making fun of them. But when we started that show, I was a crazed, overly responsible guy who had already been married for 11 years, with two children. People are still shocked to learn I have kids.

PLAYBOY: Who are, in fact, the oldest offspring among all the late-night hosts.

KIMMEL: Yes, my kids are now in their 40s. Actually, both my son and daughter are in college, but when they were little kids they, along with my ex-wife, would occasionally appear on *The Man Show*. People thought they were actors.

PLAYBOY: Your first *Playboy Interview*—just prior to the debut of *Jimmy Kimmel Live*—did dwell a bit along the lines of bowel movements and masturbation tips.

KIMMEL: At that point I had nothing to lose. I could say whatever I wanted. I was a sniper back then.

PLAYBOY: Let's talk about what has changed. For instance, you estimated here 10 years ago that you'd received only 20 blow jobs in your life. Where does the tote board stand these days?

KIMMEL: Oh, the count is way higher now. It's in the hundreds, easily. Well, maybe not easily—listen, if I were able to give myself a blow job I'm sure the number would be much, much higher. But I wasn't blessed with that kind of flexibility.

PLAYBOY: See, right there we've further broadened your public perception.

KIMMEL: Along the way, though, I've discovered people do have a hard time believing things that are true. I'm always being asked about my lunatic family members who appear on the show: "Is that your real Cousin Sal? Is that your real Aunt Chippy and Uncle Frank?" Of course they're my real cousin, aunt and uncle—I mean, who could invent crazy characters like them? But I guess people are used to seeing fake relationships on TV.

I was scared to stand in front of the audience and deliver jokes. I was a radio guy and thought I would always be a radio guy. I'm not a stand-up.

PLAYBOY: What about you? Are we seeing the same Jimmy we'd see offstage?

KIMMEL: I don't have the qualities you need to be phony, which is a huge drawback in show business. I never had any option other than to be myself. I doubt I'd be able to keep it up. I'm a guy who's not particularly handsome or well-spoken; I'm just kind of a funny guy. Starting back in my radio years, I decided to just go with that.

PLAYBOY: "Just be yourself" was Johnny Carson's first rule for late-night hosts. And by the way, you're much better looking than you think you are.

KIMMEL: Thank you. I see another blow job in my future.

PLAYBOY: During the first 14 months of *JKL* you worked with a parade of weekly co-hosts, one of whom was presidential fellatio specialist Monica Lewinsky. How were her performance skills?

KIMMEL: She was one of the worst co-hosts we had. Her one condition was that she wouldn't talk at all about President Clinton, which left only the handbags she was selling as a conversation topic. She seemed to be fragile in general, so everyone was nervous to bring up

his name around her. And by the way, after meeting her, the Clinton situation fascinates me all the more, because five minutes with that woman would tell you that this is probably not someone you'd get involved with if you wanted to keep it a secret.

PLAYBOY: Doesn't that whole co-host period seem like a bad idea?

KIMMEL: Yes, considering that most of our co-hosts were such bizarre characters. We had some very good and very bad co-hosts. The good ones were the people with whom I was most comfortable, so they returned regularly—Adam Carolla, Sarah Silverman, Kathy Griffin, David Alan Grier, Anthony Anderson. I remember having to really sell ABC on Zach Galifianakis, which is funny now that he's a big star, and happily, after his first night, they realized he was great. As for the bad ones, Deion Sanders was terrible. And the psychic John Edward—awful. He didn't want to do any psychic stuff. We had Jim Belushi as our guest and of course thought it would be fun if we tried to contact John Belushi. To my amazement Jim was all for it, but John Edward didn't want to do it. I'm convinced all psychics are completely full of shit.

PLAYBOY: Viewers also probably forgot that up until August 9, 2004, you opened the show by immediately sliding behind your desk instead of taking center stage to do a monologue. Was this a renegade act of hosting hubris?

KIMMEL: No, no, it wasn't that. I was scared to stand in front of the audience and deliver jokes. The craziest thing is, even though I had some material planned each night, I was mainly winging it for that first year and a half or so. Plus my experience onstage was limited. I was used to sitting behind a radio microphone until I started my TV work on Comedy Central's *Win Ben Stein's Money*, where I was really just a wisecracker who read the questions. Then came *The Man Show*, where I was onstage—for a hundred episodes—but partnered with Adam Carolla, who is a pretty great crutch if you're looking for one. So when this show started, I think I made a good decision to just come out and follow the Regis Philbin model—sitting down and chatting with the co-hosts. It felt more comfortable. But imagine a comedian who has been onstage only a hundred times being asked to host a talk show.

PLAYBOY: Then again, are you technically a broadcaster first and a comedian second? That was David Letterman's path.

KIMMEL: Dave did radio, local television and then a lot of stand-up comedy when he moved to L.A. I hadn't done anything like that. I was a radio guy and thought I would always be a radio guy. That was my only goal. People mistakenly think I'd been planning to host a late-night talk show since I was a kid. I wish that was the case because it's a better story—

and I did deeply worship Letterman, no question. But I'm not a stand-up, and furthermore, it never dawned on me as a kid that there could be other talk shows besides Dave's and Johnny's. I looked with disdain on anybody who tried to start a new one. It was off-putting to me that Pat Sajak or Rick Dees would dare go up against Johnny Carson. I resented them for trying. Frankly, those shows never worked anyway.

PLAYBOY: Is it true you're never nervous before show time?

KIMMEL: Yeah, very rarely. It's just the rhythm you have to get into. You have no choice but to do it, so you just do it. In fact, I can't remember the last time I was nervous. Do you think any of the hosts are? I mean, at a certain point, how could you be? Your metabolism will acclimate. Maybe it's like being a homicide detective. You're horrified by the first 50 dead bodies you see splayed all over the sidewalk, but eventually you're propping one up to take your Christmas-card photograph with a decapitated head.

PLAYBOY: ABC brought you aboard to draw male viewers, basically your *Man Show* fan base. Ironically, soon after that the network's prime-time demographics became hugely female. Were adjustments made to become more women-friendly?

KIMMEL: On some level, yes. For me it was not a matter of the things I did; it was the things I chose not to do that made an impact. Our show had a lot of staff from *The Man Show*, and the sensibility hadn't changed much. But there came a certain point when I knew change had arrived. It was when Steve-O, the *Jackass* stunt maniac, came on and wanted me to do a bit in which I'd throw darts into his ass. And I said, "You know what? Not only do I not want to do that, I wouldn't even want to see that." I don't know anyone who would want to see that. I'm sure certain people out there might, but I didn't think it was right for our show.

PLAYBOY: Was that your turning point?

KIMMEL: It really was. That's the moment I grew up: when I declined Steve-O's invitation to throw darts into his ass.

PLAYBOY: You demonstrated another big stride in TV maturity when you finally consented to wearing ties. You'd held out on that one for almost three years.

KIMMEL: I finally put on a tie, yeah. Before that I'd sometimes wear one as part of a costume, and whenever I did everybody at ABC would be thrilled: "Oh! You look so great in that tie!" Even Disney-ABC chairman Michael Eisner would try to convince me to wear the tie. The reason I didn't is because I felt it was a "give" that I could rely on later—like a chit. I held back until they became insistent, and then I gave in, which kept them happy for at least a year. The tie made them feel like I was listening to them. And of course it was the right decision. We have this idea that television executives don't know anything and we

know everything. The truth is they know just as much stuff as we do, and as much as you don't want to say it, sometimes they're right.

PLAYBOY: Only Craig Ferguson has dared to keep his tie loosened.

KIMMEL: Yeah, it's to reflect how casual and off-the-cuff he is. His tie is askew. You don't plan that—it just happens.

PLAYBOY: You've thrown some notorious star-studded parties in your home, welcoming everyone from Howard Stern to Don Rickles. What's your secret to great party giving?

KIMMEL: I don't know. I'm not a great partygoer. When I go to a party all I want to do is go home. I like having parties because I don't have to go home. I already am home.

PLAYBOY: But doesn't the host have the least fun?

KIMMEL: Theoretically yes, the party host has the least fun. But it's worth it to not feel uncomfortable in other people's houses. I do know you need to have cocktails and something to eat. If you put a little extra effort into these things, it surprises and impresses people.

*I'm not a great partygoer.
When I go to a party all
I want to do is go home. I
like having parties because
I don't have to go home. I
already am home.*

PLAYBOY: What did it take to successfully entertain Rickles?

KIMMEL: I guess a mixture of pride—which I always take in preparing a meal for people—and also fear, knowing the insults would never end if anything was even slightly out of place. I know it went well, though, because all Don criticized was the stairs he had to walk up. To hear him explain it, it was like scaling the side of Rapunzel's castle. But the reality is there are six steps leading up to my front door, and he came in the back way. He just didn't like the idea of stairs in general.

PLAYBOY: Historically, what's the one surefire dish you serve that people love?

KIMMEL: Pizza. Chris Bianco, the world-famous pizza chef from Phoenix, taught me as much as I can learn without the benefit of his 30 years of experience. I can get to about 84 percent in terms of replicating his pizzas, which is pretty great. I've got a brick pizza oven in the backyard. No one has ever been disappointed. And you can tell when people really like something; they go through an emotional process, like "Oh my God! Wow, this is good!" But please let me point out that 95 percent of the events

at my home do not involve celebrities of any kind.

PLAYBOY: That wasn't the case with your weekly multiscreen Football Sunday game-viewing parties—which stopped a couple of years ago. Guests on your show would openly beg for invites.

KIMMEL: That was mostly the result of Adam Carolla and Bill Simmons of ESPN talking about it on their podcasts and radio shows and websites. Celebrity-wise, there'd be occasional drop-ins like Tom Arnold, Kathy Griffin, Jon Hamm pre-*Mad Men*—but mainly it was a lot of *Man Show* staff guys and friends who, after my marriage ended, I began having over to watch football every Sunday. It finally got overwhelming. I'd spend almost all of Saturday shopping and cooking, and then Sunday preparing everything while watching the games with them. Then they started asking if they could bring other friends, and I'd say okay, and those friends of friends would come every week and become part of the group, and then eventually the friends of friends brought along more friends, who also became regulars. It just got so big that I was too busy to barely even glance up at any of the games.

PLAYBOY: Proving once again that party hosts do have the least fun.

KIMMEL: More like proving the sad fact that I never have the heart to tell anyone no.

PLAYBOY: But then Tom Cruise asked you about it on the air one night, which led to probably the strangest Football Sunday in history.

KIMMEL: True. I invited him, and Tom Cruise came over—with his mom. Now, there are a lot of fictitious versions of what happened that day, most of them perpetrated by Adam Carolla, who was so drunk at the time he remembers no actual facts. And also our pal Jeffrey Ross the comic filled a whole chapter in his book with an incorrect version.

The definitive version—to make it as concise as possible—starts, as do all idiotic stories, with Cousin Sal, who instigates evil for pleasure. In this case his victim was Jeff Ross, who months earlier had been on *Dancing With the Stars* and was eliminated in the first week of competition. And because we have the eliminated stars as guests immediately afterward on those same nights, you should know that we find out who got the lowest votes a little bit before the general public does. It's a network courtesy, just to help us prepare questions. Anyway, on the afternoon of that season's first elimination night, we had no idea yet whether Jeff had been voted off, but we did know that on the previous night he scored a 12—the lowest score of the night. So Sal, who has constantly screwed with Jeff for 10 years minimum, decided to send him a text that said, "You're safe." We figured Jeff would at least be suspicious. He texted back, "Really?" Sal texted, "Yes. Don't tell anyone."

Jeff of course instantly told his dance partner, "We're safe!"—and then on the live broadcast later pretended to be nervous when they found themselves, naturally, as one of the two couples with the least votes. And then, surprising only him, he was eliminated. If you watch the tape you can see him mouth the words "We lost? We lost?" He looked as if he'd been hit by a train. He was so angry about this prank he wouldn't speak to Sal for months. And they were pretty close—in fact, it's a sore point that still lingers. Ross even avoided Football Sundays for a while but decided to show up the same day Tom Cruise decided to come—which I hadn't told anyone. Tom arrived as promised, along with his mom, who's a very lovely woman.

PLAYBOY: Little did they know what awaited them.

KIMMEL: Right. Tragically, Sal and Jeff had resumed sniping at each other that afternoon. After the games ended, someone—probably Sal—decided that the best way to settle this dispute would be to lay the case out for Tom and his mother. Suddenly, a courtroom scenario was set up in the living room—this was at my previous house—with Sarah acting as Jeff's attorney and me acting as Sal's. Sarah and I were still together then. We carefully presented all the insane details of the case to Tom and his mom, who graciously agreed—after already being at my house for seven hours—to spend another two hours listening to this nonsense, with Tom earnestly questioning both defendants. In the end, Tom deferred to his mother because he ultimately didn't know what to make of such lunacy. And his mother said, "I think you're both acting like little boys." Which pretty much shut it down, appropriately. So no resolution ever came, but it was fun to purge and play it out, which kind of healed that ridiculous situation.

PLAYBOY: Then there was the Carolla version to straighten out.

KIMMEL: Yes. Carolla told a separate story about that day in his book, which I pointed out to him was untrue and which he then realized was untrue. He'd forgotten how smashed he'd been. But Adam long ago invented a victory dance where he makes it look like he's shitting a football out of his ass while reading a newspaper. It's very funny. He demonstrated it to Tom and Tom's mom—not that they asked for it; he just did it. And they also thought it was very funny. Then Adam went home. In Adam's book, however, they were so offended that they left in a huff. But the truth is they stayed another five hours after Adam left. I was especially annoyed when I read his story because it makes Tom Cruise look like a humorless dick when that wasn't the case at all.

PLAYBOY: You once lamented, "I wish I could enjoy things more in the moment."

How are you doing with that?

KIMMEL: Not doing well with that, frankly. That situation really hasn't changed. *[laughs]*

PLAYBOY: Yet on your show you clearly thrive in the moment, dependably asking fun questions none of your competitors think to ask and also actually listening to guests—which is a great lost art among late-night hosts.

KIMMEL: *Hmm?* I'm sorry. I wasn't paying attention.

PLAYBOY: Exactly. But you do adhere to the Howard Stern school of probing guests for answers the public truly wants to hear.

KIMMEL: Nobody does it like Howard. By now, if somebody wants to be on his show, they're prepared to face the consequences, whereas we have a merry-go-round of publicists and celebrities to please. Increasingly, guests also know what they're getting into with us and aren't surprised if I ask a weird question. I just try to put myself in their real-life shoes when figuring what I might ask. We recently had Daniel Craig on, and mainly I was thinking about the fact that he's James Bond and how great it must

I feel bad if I hurt anybody's feelings, but I don't believe

Jay Leno has actual feelings, and he doesn't seem to be that worried about other people's feelings.

be to be James Bond and how pleased with myself I would be if I were James Bond. I'd probably look at myself in the mirror constantly and repeat over and over again "Bond. James Bond." That would be very enjoyable.

PLAYBOY: If not in the moment, can you enjoy things in retrospect?

KIMMEL: Overall I enjoy life, but I also have too much work to do. Whenever I'm relaxing I feel like I'm being lazy—that there's something I need to attend to. I'm almost always preoccupied, like I'm nearly drowning at all times when it comes to work and returning e-mails and revising scripts and on and on. The only way to alleviate that anxiety for me is to get stuff done. Theoretically if I didn't have as much work to do I could relax. Who knows what the reality would be without the work? What I do know is when I go on vacation I'm quite able to enjoy myself. If I go away and don't have any deadlines looming, then no problem.

PLAYBOY: So outside of the context of everyday life, you're able to relax. Does that mean even if you're at home, there's no sanctuary for you?

KIMMEL: Right. Because if I'm here at

home—well, see those pictures stacked over there? *[points across the room]* They still haven't been hung because I haven't figured out where I want to put them, and this drives me crazy. There are so many things I feel need to be done that it's impossible not to worry about what I should do next.

PLAYBOY: Your last home was more of a bachelor dream playhouse, whereas you now have an aesthetically elegant sprawl here. Is that on purpose?

KIMMEL: Yeah, I wanted to have a more grown-up house. I've been here three years, and it's still in transition. Since Molly moved in, though, it's gotten more homey. There are flowers in the house now, which is not the sort of thing that would've occurred to me. It's a nice look.

PLAYBOY: Molly McNearney is your co-head writer, and you two have a summer wedding planned. Do you consider yourself a romantic?

KIMMEL: Not particularly. I'm more a traditionalist than a romantic. I am not the most communicative person, so any real expression of my emotion is greatly appreciated. I write notes. It's easier for me to express love in writing. When I try to do it one-on-one it usually turns into a joke. I have a tendency to ruin things.

PLAYBOY: You first got married as a kid—or, as you've said, as a fetus, really.

KIMMEL: I was 20 years old. I did it because that was the plan. I didn't make the plan, but that seemed to be the plan. I was raised, I suppose, to become a traditionalist.

PLAYBOY: Plus you've always maintained a pretty rigid code for the women with whom you've allowed yourself to become involved—all three of them to be precise: your ex-wife, Gina; Sarah Silverman; and, for the past four years, Molly.

KIMMEL: Yeah, I would never date someone I'm convinced wouldn't have dated me when I was in high school. I'm not that kind of guy. I want to be loved for who I am, not for what I do for a living.

PLAYBOY: Historically, though, you claim to have always been terrible at knowing when women had an interest in you.

KIMMEL: Yes. Or maybe I was really good at it and no women were interested in me. It was one of those two things.

PLAYBOY: Could that partly be why you married a few years after high school?

KIMMEL: Probably that was in the thought process: I'd better lock her down, better get her contractually obliged before it's too late.

PLAYBOY: Sarah used to say she encouraged you to date other people because you had no wild oats. Also because you'd ostensibly appreciate her more by contrast.

KIMMEL: *[Laughs]* It wasn't real encouragement, though. That was pretend encouragement. She knew I wasn't going to do it.

PLAYBOY: Did you know you were going to pop the *(continued on page 127)*

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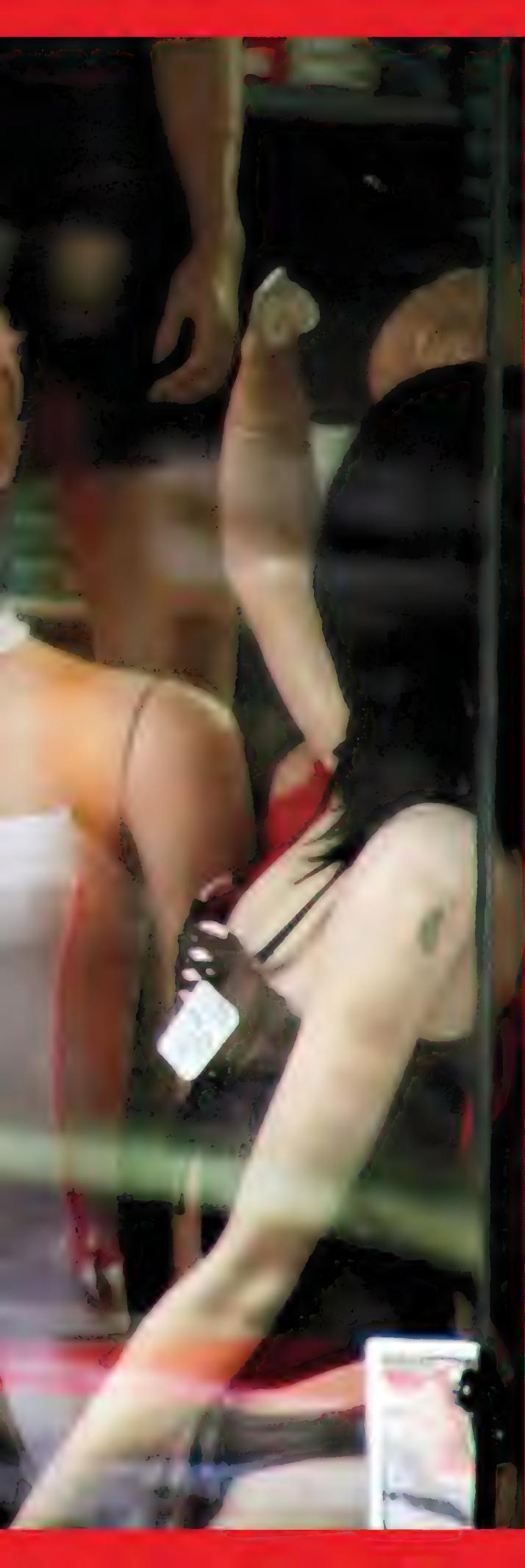
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THE COLD ARAB SPRING

THE REVOLUTION WASN'T
WHAT WE EXPECTED.
FREEDOM SOMETIMES COMES
IN STRANGE FORMS. FROM
MOROCCO TO THE GAZA STRIP, WE
LOOK AT HOW LIBERATION
CHANGED THE MUSLIM WORLD

BY NICOLAS PELHAM



O

bservers of the first turbulent days of the Arab awakening could have been forgiven for predicting the triumph of Western values of liberty. Scenes of girls fearlessly marching on the palaces of the anciens régimes evoked the French Revolution. Women led rallies heralding Tripoli's liberation from 42 years of Colonel Muammar el-Qaddafi's dictatorship and earned their place at the tables of Cairo's coffeehouses, long a bastion of Egyptian males. The angry reaction to soldiers in Cairo who chased female protesters and subjected them to virginity tests showed just how much the public mood had changed.

But two years on, the promise of individual as well as national liberation still hangs in the balance. The secular youths who braved the batons and bullets seem mere stalking horses for the Islamist cavalry bent on regulating according to God's word not only the public life of Arabs but their private predilections as well. Among the first victims were Alexandria's statues of bare-breasted mermaids, which for more than a century had borne a hunky Zeus on a marble platter. During the French Revolution, women bared their breasts; during Egypt's, iconoclasts covered them up.

Rather than welcoming the tempests of change blowing the idea of liberty from Europe, the Arab world seems to have succumbed to the puritanical sandstorms that have since ancient times periodically blown in from the Sahara, cleansing like pumice stones the epicurean ways of the southern Mediterranean with rugged monotheism. Clerics railed against the



"INSTEAD OF BRINGING FREEDOM FOR ALL, THE REVOLUTION HAS PROPELLED US BACK YEARS, BURYING THE PROGRESS I THOUGHT I'D ACQUIRED."

the western edge of the Atlas Mountains. Islamists swept the elections at the height of the Arab Spring, but their influence in Morocco is contained by an imperious monarchy whose current ruler had a reputation in his youth as a playboy. As crown prince, Mohammed VI wore slick piano ties and had royal bouncers escort him from his advisor's flat to the VIP lounge at Amnesia, the most risqué discotheque I know of in North Africa. His love of water sports was so widely known that when he became king his subjects called him "ma-Jet-Ski."

But once he became king he surfed the Islamist wave with remarkable dexterity. He was (continued on page 118)

Western colonial mores that earlier Arab revolutions had failed to root out. Although hundreds of thousands of European settlers had been swept out in the 1950s and 1960s, by the eve of the Arab Spring 30 million tourists were being invited in each year. Helped by natives, these tourists played out their Oriental fantasies, bronzing, boozing and bonking on North Africa's beaches.

The desert-born faith is threatening to suppress immoral conduct as remorselessly as the Saharan sands that buried the pharaohs' fertility cults and the Romans' mosaics of bacchanals. Jolanare, a young lecturer in belles lettres dressed in cowboy boots and a miniskirt, berated the youths in Tunisia, once the most sexually liberated country in the Arab world and the first to rise up against its dictator in December 2010, for losing control to the Islamists. "Instead of bringing freedom for all, the revolution has propelled us back years, burying the progress I thought I'd acquired," Jolanare said. In response to the change, her blog sports an illustration of a woman's pubic hair shaped as an Islamist's beard. "I never thought that one day I would have to defend my basic right to exist as a sexual person, with breasts, lips and an ability to think."

For a Western pleasure seeker, arriving in Morocco—a mere eight miles from southern Europe—is like diving into the shallow end. Cultural battles that rage elsewhere in the Arab world peter out by the time they clamber over



“Will you be my valentine...?”

the muse

Parisian photographer David Bellemere had no idea what he was in for when Polish model Karolina Szymczak arrived at his home. He knew he would be photographing her. He did not know how much she would inspire him as an artist. The 21-year-old model appeared "very fresh," he remembers, "no makeup, such a beauty." He began shooting her by the window so the natural light would paint the contours of her body, just as he was discovering them himself. And then it happened. "She brought me to the process of creation," he says, "where I forget myself and just shoot what I love, how I love." This is the definition of a muse, one who reaches into an artist's soul and touches the wellspring of his genius. It was like "a state of ecstasy," Bellemere says. "It doesn't happen often. I loved it." So do we.

NOUN [myüz] 1. A goddess of inspiration presiding over an art



Photography by DAVID BELLEMERE











In 1977 a former stuntman named Hal Needham and his pals Burt Reynolds, Sally Field and Jackie Gleason invented a new genre of movie.

Smokey and the

Bandit may not seem earth-shattering now, but it changed Hollywood forever.



THE Birth OF Redneck Cinema



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SCOTT DUKES

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MOTORS, LOS ANGELES

B4 STEPHEN REBELLO

PONTIAC

ON OPENING NIGHT
THERE WERE AISLES OF
POSH VELVET SEATS,
MOST OF THEM EMPTY.



THE CAR IS THE STAR: THE FOUR 1977 PONTIAC FIREBIRD TRANS AMS USED IN FILMING WERE SPECIALLY OUTFITTED FOR STUNT WORK. HUMANS ALSO PLAYED A PART: BURT REYNOLDS AND SALLY FIELD FELL IN LOVE (LEFT), JERRY REED BECAME ONE OF THE FIRST COUNTRY CROSSOVER STARS (TOP RIGHT), JACKIE GLEASON AD-LIBBED THROUGH THE MOVIE (RIGHT), AND DIRECTOR HAL NEEDHAM COLLECTED AN HONORARY OSCAR IN DECEMBER 2012 (BELOW).

Last past December, during a fancy all-duded-up Governors Awards ceremony at the Ray Dolby Ballroom in Los Angeles, Hal Needham, the legendary stuntman and director of *Smokey and the Bandit* and *The Cannonball Run*, stepped up to the podium to claim his honorary Oscar. The daredevil, square-jawed veteran of hair-raising stunts in more than 300 feature films—in which he broke 56 bones, twice broke his back, fractured a collarbone, punctured a lung and lost several teeth—Needham, 81, has earned the slight hitch in his giddyup that now dents his famed swagger. Besides, he prob-

ably never expected the film industry to salute him for his life's work—particularly if he flashed back to May 19, 1977, the Thursday night his debut movie turned America's grandest, most popular movie showplace, New York City's 6,000-seat Radio City Music Hall, into an outsize art deco ghost town.

On that white-knuckle night, not even the allure of 100 leggy Rockettes high-kicking in slinky military precision managed to draw flies to the world premiere of Needham's directing debut,

Smokey and the Bandit. For the uninitiated or those who may need a reminder, the twangy barnstormer is 96 minutes of pedal-to-the-metal, Southern-fried, grinning-ear-to-ear car chases and badassery featuring a runaway bride, a scene-stealing hound and the even bigger scene-stealing Jackie Gleason as a short-fused, potty-mouthed sheriff—not to mention the plot: To win an \$80,000 bet, ultracool outlaw Burt Reynolds, driving a black Pontiac Firebird Trans Am, and ace trucker Jerry Reed, behind the wheel of a souped-up semi, have to haul 400 cases of contraband Coors 1,800 miles in under 28 hours.

But back in 1977, Manhattan wasn't cottoning to Needham's raucous, randy good-old-boy salute to hot cars, 18-wheelers, open throttles and two-lane blacktops. The release of *Smokey and the Bandit* wasn't trumpeted in high-profile Burt Reynolds interviews, there was no red-carpet opening, and Needham hadn't been flown out to publicize the flick. Not surprisingly, the New York film critics were short on Northern hospitality. *The New York Times* deemed the movie fit only for "audiences capable of slavering all over a Pontiac Trans Am, 18-wheel tractor-trailer rigs and dismembered police cruisers and motorcycles." Other reviewers found it "thoroughly unimaginative" and an "unfortunate waste of talent." Nobody involved in the making of *Smokey* was naive enough to think they had (continued on page 130)





"You're supposed to crawl on the floor, dear!"





THE GODDESS PAK

Andrey Alexeevich didn't know what to do after he lost his Nina.
But somehow he found her again

BY LUDMILLA PETRUSHEVSKAYA

On the night of Alevtina's arrival, the landlady was boiling a samovar on pinecones. She opened conversation with complaints about her miserly tenant.

"Stingy, you wouldn't believe. First thing he tells me, he isn't going to use any power. Unmarried too."

"Huh."

"I said *unmarried*. Thirty-five years old. Not a crumb on his porch. What does he eat?"

"Maybe he catches the bus to town, goes to the cafeteria there."

"Ha! The bus doesn't stop here most of the time. Well, so how about my black currants? Will you buy any this year?"

"Only if the berries are large."

"Large! After all the work, all the watering...."

And the irritated landlady went on to stipulate the virtues of her black currants, hungry for a deal. Alevtina, rumor had it, lived in Moscow in great comfort and even wealth. At the thought of Alevtina's riches, the landlady wanted to boast. She mentioned two magnificent apartments that she gave to her daughters and their worthless husbands when their old house was demolished. One husband was in the police, the other a fireman at a factory; he worked one day and slept two, but try to get him to fix the roof—he's too busy watching soap operas. His brats are shipped to Grandma's every summer and she's expected to provide all the meals and so forth.

At this moment, A.A. slipped in through the gate and climbed onto his porch. He reappeared with two buckets, filled them with water from the well and began washing himself down to the waist. The two Penelopes watched him over their teacups.

"Alexeich," the landlady called out with dignity, although a bit uncertainly. "I say, help

(continued on page 144)

A.

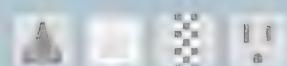
A., a schoolteacher in a provincial town, decided to spend his summer holiday near a lake and woods, not far from where he lived. He rented a screened porch in a cabin (he couldn't afford a whole house) and began to live there very quietly. He left in the morning with a backpack and returned late at night. He never asked for anything and refused offers of dinner leftovers, to the chagrin of his landlady, who had planned to charge him for food or, at least, for the use of a hot plate.

A.A.'s search for privacy and independence didn't take into account a certain Aunt Alevtina, a resident of Moscow and his landlady's distant relative. Alevtina visited the cabin every summer. She'd stay two weeks and leave in a van loaded with fresh preserves. She stayed in a small room in the landlady's shed, a room she had equipped with a small television and refrigerator. She paid the electric bill by a separate meter at the end of her stay. Again, the landlady was left without a profit, although, to be fair, her grandkids did stay with Aunt Alevtina in Moscow over Christmas holidays and got to see the Kremlin.

THUNDER

* PLAYBOY'S 2013 MOTORCYCLE PREVIEW *

ROAD



The motorcycle market took a big hit in 2008. Baby boomers, the industry's traditional audience, were cash-strapped. Bikes were getting too expensive and feature-laden, losing their purity of purpose and fundamental role as fun transportation. Now sales are recovering, thanks to a new generation of simple, affordable, appealing motorcycles like the ones pictured here—all of them among the best ever made.

By Matt Miller

BEST Sport Bike

* TRIUMPH DAYTONA 675R \$15,499

In an age when the quality of nearly every stock sport bike has been

reduced in the name of cost-cutting, Triumph has fitted its middleweight 675R with the absolute nicest Ohlins suspension and Brembo brakes. That means you get the kind of handling otherwise reserved for \$30,000 Ducatis. Also new antilock brakes that can be switched off for track days and a slipper clutch to enable faster corner entries. Plus the three-cylinder engine has been revised for higher revs and power. This rocket triumphs indeed. It's the sharpest sport bike out there.



BEST Cruiser

* MOTO GUZZI CALIFORNIA 1400 PRICE TBA

55

Under new ownership that saved the company from oblivion, Moto Guzzi has produced its first new bike in two years from its 91-year-old factory in Italy. The California 1400 (named for the Moto Guzzi California of the 1970s) is the most high-tech cruiser ever made. The V-twin is fitted with a ride-by-wire throttle control and traction control. Power delivery, throttle response and traction control can be tweaked, but in a fit of Italian pride, the wet, touring and performance modes are called *bagnato*, *turismo* and *veloce*. Legendary designer Miguel Galluzzi turned his hand to the styling—a retro-futuristic look that fascinates.

BEST Adventure*** KTM 990 ADV \$14,899**

Most adventure bikes are overweight, over-complicated tourers that are about as off-road capable as a minivan. But not the KTM 990—a road-legal dirt bike. Complete with a dirt-spec 21-inch front wheel and clever design features including saddle-style twin fuel tanks that carry gas down low, every component is designed to boost off-road performance. The bike's 114 horsepower may not sound like a lot, but it's set up to punch so you can pop a quick wheelie to clear an obstacle or initiate a turn with just a crack of throttle. On-road, the 990 can keep up with most sport bikes, even on all-terrain tires. Adventure? You know it.



125

STYLE + SAFETY = AWESOME**THE Adventurer**

AGV's AX-8 Dual Evo helmet (\$400, adv.com) is lightweight and offers panoramic vision and all-day comfort. Aerostich's Roadcrafter jacket (\$557, aerostich.com) adds protection against impacts and bad weather.

**THE Son of Anarchy**

The Bell Custom 500 (\$140, bellhelmets.com) cranium cooler is designed to fit low to avoid that *son of a biker* look. Icon's Associate vest (\$450, revzilla.com) has a removable back protector made of tough polymer.

**THE Café Racer**

For the whiskers-with-motorcycle safety, go for an AGV RP60 Café Racer helmet (\$220, agv.com) and a Vanson Cobra 2 jacket (\$119.95, vansonleather.com). It's the thickest, toughest leather with race-level load, 37° C.

**THE Speed Freak**

Nexx's XR1R Champion (\$459, nexx-usa.com) is the lightest full-face helmet with the largest field of vision. Alpinestars' TechAir suit (\$5,000, alpinestars.com) has built-in

TECH-AIR PROTECTION

BEST Learner

* CCW
THA
MISFIT
\$3,195



If you're learning to ride or just want something cheap and easy think as light and simple as possible. CCW's Tha Misfit is nearly 100 pounds lighter than other 250s and uses a redesigned version of Honda's legendary CG motor (which is as basic as an engine can get). It's of-the-moment stylish, genuinely fun to ride and—designed in Cleveland but built in China—amazingly inexpensive. Even starting out, you'll be able to use full-throttle acceleration. Just avoid aggressive freeways the bike's top speed isn't quite enough to keep up with the flow

75 MPH

64
MPG

BEST Commuter

* HONDA
NC700X
\$6,999



Honda's new jack-of-all-trades is all about versatility and fuel economy. At 64 miles per gallon, the bike is more frugal than the firm's 250 cc bikes but fast enough to out-accelerate most cars. It's equally at home with a solo rider or two-up and packs a load better than nearly any other bike. Fit the optional top box and panniers and this thing will carry you on a cross-country camping trip or haul a week's worth of shopping for your family. If you're looking to make the switch from four wheels to two, this is the bike to do it on

ENGINE
POWER

670 PARALLEL TWIN
51 BHP | TORQUE

44 FT.-LBS.
474 LBS. WET

120 MPH EST. TOP
SPEED

The Bike That Changed My Life

Two well-known riders
take a look in the rearview



YAMAHA MOTOGP RACER

Ben Spies

"The **Yamaha PW50**. When I first got on and rode it as a kid, I knew that riding would be a part of my life in a big way. My mom encouraged BMX and motocross, but that wasn't the same for me. Those bikes were fun, but it was the PW50 I came back to. I started asking how to get into a club race. I was able to take my test to join the Central Motorcycle Roadracing Association when I was eight years old. I couldn't master the written test and was allowed to take it with the board members asking me the questions. My first race was at the end of the year; I was still eight years old."



TONIGHT SHOW HOST

Jay Leno

"The most influential motorcycle in my life was the **Honda CBX1000** because it's the only one I ever bought new. I grew up in the 1960s, when muscle cars were faster than motorcycles. Motorcycle technology wasn't moving quickly. But when the Honda CBX came along in 1978, it came out of nowhere. And it was a six-cylinder!

An 85-horsepower, six-cylinder motorcycle seemed like the most audacious thing I'd ever seen. It was just unbelievable. I bought one new, I crashed it, and with the insurance money I went down and got another one. And I still have it."

BEST Touring*** BMW K 1600 GTL \$23,200**

 Drive a BMW car and you know how smooth and torquey a straight-six engine can be. Now BMW has installed a six across this bike's aluminum-beam frame. Its handling has to be experienced to be believed. BMW's archetypal Duolever front suspension makes for rapid steering and absolute stability. It manages well at night too. A rotating headlight beams around corners. This bike matches its main rival, the Honda Gold Wing, in long-distance comfort. But in handling, it runs circles around it.

105 MPH 100 MILES

136 MPH 100 MILES

45 MPH

**BEST Retro***** HARLEY-DAVIDSON IRON 883 \$7,999**

You can't beat the original. Harley has been manufacturing the Sportster continually since 1957. A more efficient motor, a rubber-mounted engine and a five-speed transmission have kept it up-to-date without spoiling the original formula. The new Iron 883 Sportster is the most affordable Harley and the stealthiest—the paint, wheels and motor are all black. Thumb the electric starter (added in 1967) and the engine roars to life with Harley all-American thunder. Just the thing for roaring down a deserted highway.

ENGINE 883 CC V-TWIN | TORQUE 55 FT-LBS.
POWER 53 BHP | WEIGHT 573 LBS. WET

100 MPH 100 MILES



MOTORCYCLE of the

**BEST Electric***** BRAMMO EMPULSE R \$18,000**

 The Empulse R is the first fully electric motorcycle that can travel farther than 100 miles on a charge and top 100 miles per hour. It's also one of the best-handling bikes ever made. The tiny Oregon-based start-up Brammo modeled suspension geometry and ergonomics from one of the best sport bikes out there, Triumph's Street Triple. Top-drawer components including fully adjustable suspension and lightweight forged-aluminum wheels improve the package. But it's the electric drivetrain that elevates the Empulse R. The result: a completely intuitive feel, hardwiring your brain to the tires. Who knew breaking speed limits could be so eco-friendly?

121 MPH



105 MPH 100 MILES



2Q

BY ERIC SPITZNAGEL
PHOTOGRAPHY BY MICHAEL MULLER

THE COMIC WHO REDEFINES THE WORD NERD COMES CLEAN
ABOUT HIS DAYS ON MTV, HOW A JON STEWART INSULT CHANGED
HIS LIFE AND WHY GEEKS ARE THE NEW SEX MACHINES



Q1

PLAYBOY: Your podcast, called *Nerdist*, gets 4 million downloads every month. Are podcasts the future of comedy or just something to do while you wait to get cast in a sitcom?

HARDWICK: I do podcasts for the same reasons I do stand-up comedy. I love it, and I don't care if anybody else gets it. I don't know if the podcast as a medium will ever have the cultural impact that TV and movies do. It may never be super-mainstream. For some people, you say podcasts and they're like, "What the hell is that?" They don't understand it's like a radio show you can download. Mainstream culture

is like your mom: It's always a little late to catch on and gets easily confused by technology, but it means well.

Q2

PLAYBOY: What exactly is a nerdist? Is it just a fancy word for nerd?

HARDWICK: I think the Urban Dictionary defines *nerdist* as "an artful nerd." That's not bad. It's on the safe side of pretentious. Nerdists, unlike nerds, tend to be creators as much as consumers. They're creative consumers. They don't just



sit and watch passively. They're crafty. They make shirts and posters and confectionery things.

Q3

PLAYBOY: Nerds have been around since the dawn of time. Why are they getting respect now?

HARDWICK: Because nerds make money. I hate to say it, but because of humanity's capitalistic nature, money is important. And with money comes power. I think it's also about accessibility. So many people of this current generation have grown up with technology and video games, it's not nerdy to like that kind of stuff anymore. Nerd culture is ubiquitous.

Q4

PLAYBOY: Nerdist Industries is the name of your media empire of websites, podcasts and YouTube videos. In what ways are you similar to ruthless 19th century industrialist George Pullman?

HARDWICK: In every way. [laughs] I've always had a fondness for that satirical, Terry Gilliam-esque evil corporate megastructure, the kind of business that hangs banners that say MAKING YOUR LIFE BETTER as it throws kittens into the gears. I want Nerdist Industries to be like that. For a while we were using the slogan "Nerdist: Making Today the Yesterday of Tomorrow," which is just stupid. It's dumb

doublespeak. But the whole idea of being an industry is about making fun of people's confusion.

Q5

PLAYBOY: You were born in Kentucky and raised in Tennessee, but you don't have even a trace of a Southern accent. Do you consider yourself a Southerner?

HARDWICK: I love the South. Although I grew up primarily in Memphis, my family moved around a ton when I was a kid. I guess I never stayed in one place long enough to pick up the accent, but I definitely identify as a Southerner. I fucking love grits, for one thing. I am a grits-eating motherfucker. I love all Southern cooking—collard greens, black-eyed peas, I'll eat it all. Put me in the kitchen and you'll see how Southern I can be.

Q6

PLAYBOY: Your father is a retired professional bowler. Were you ever pressured to go into the family business?

HARDWICK: Absolutely not. Both my parents recognized early on that I wanted to do something in comedy, and they were really supportive. They're the ones who bought me Steve Martin records and let me watch R-rated comedies long before they probably should have. But I still spent a lot of time bowling as a kid, mostly because I grew up in bowling alleys.

They were kind of my playgrounds. Not only was my dad a pro bowler, but my mother's father and brother both owned their own bowling centers. I still bowl today, though I wouldn't recommend doing it with me. I'm not fun to bowl with, believe me. I take it way too seriously.

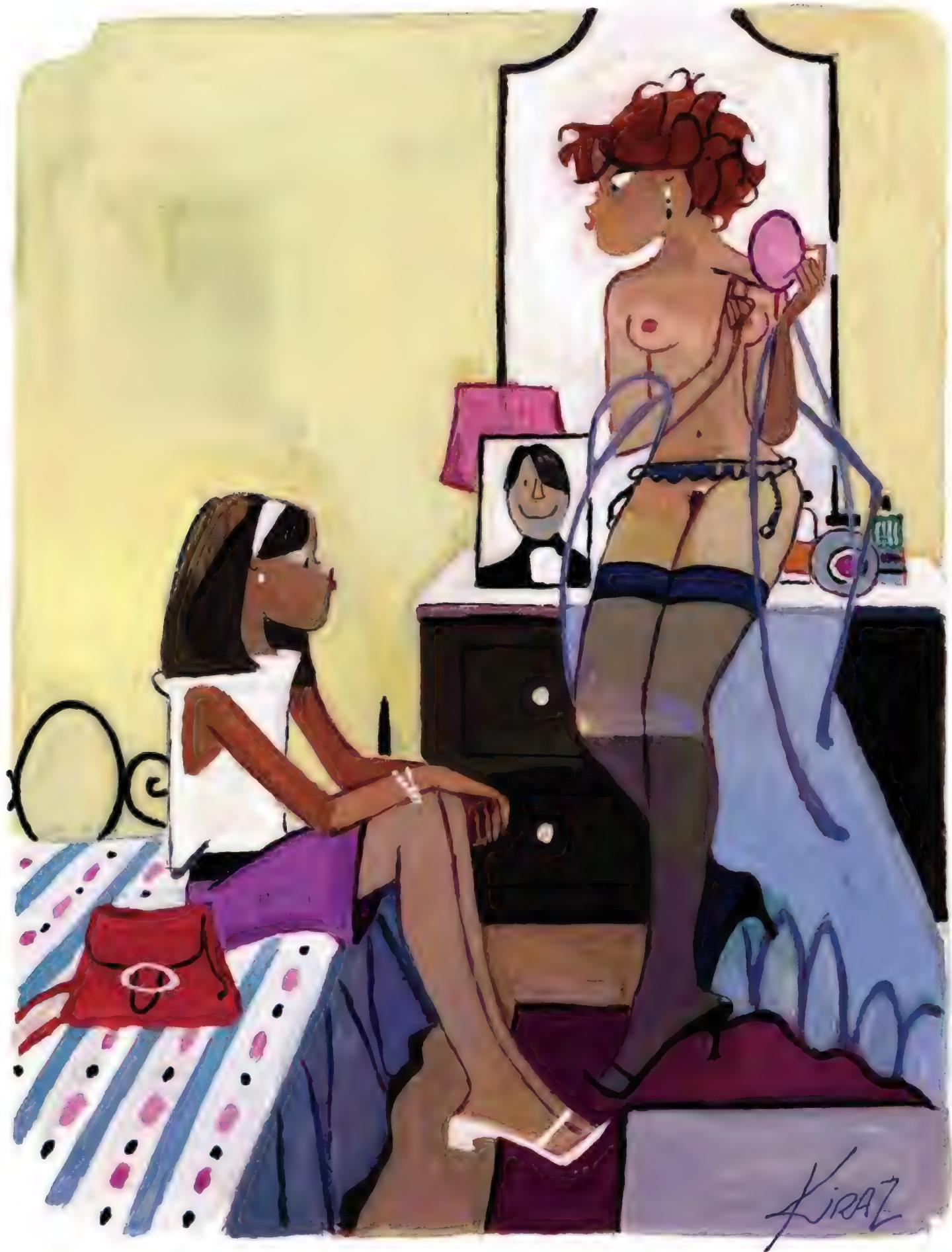
Q7

PLAYBOY: How did you discover your nerd tendencies growing up in a bowling alley? It's not a nerd-friendly environment.

HARDWICK: It can be. That's where I got into arcade games. My grandfather, my mom's dad, who was a really smart and wonderful man, was a technophile. He was the first guy to buy those big laser-disc players in 1979. He had the latest camcorders and stereo systems and Betamax players. He noticed early on that video games were a big deal, so he set up a massive arcade in his bowling center in Florida. I spent all my time there. When I wasn't playing video games, my friends and I would play Dungeons & Dragons or chess at the bar. I had full access to all my nerd obsessions. I guess when I think about it, I was a spoiled piece of shit.

Q8

PLAYBOY: You're not a fan of competitive athletic (continued on page 141)



"He is nice, well educated and a hard worker. But I'm only attracted to bad boys...!"



Flower Power

VENTURE INTO OUR SECRET GARDEN, WHERE WILD BLOSSOM MISS MARCH AWAITS IN FULL BLOOM



PHOTOGRAPHY BY SASHA EISENMAN

*W*ith winter darkness primed to blaze into floral glory, our thoughts turn to one of Emerson's most brilliant turns of phrase: "The earth laughs in flowers." For true transcendence, we offer a ravishing bloom in human form: Miss March Ashley Doris, an exotic rose (and our first Connecticut-born and -bred Playmate) of black, Spanish, English and German extraction. She's not afraid to get her hands dirty. "Not only have I worked in a florist shop since I was 18," says the 23-year-old college senior, "but I've been obsessed with flowers all my life. Back in elementary school I'd bring a huge flower encyclopedia for reading time, and I signed our yearbook 'Ashley Doris, a.k.a. the Flower Queen.'" Ashley's favorites are orchids, roses and hydrangeas. And listen up: The lady is hungry for a bouquet. "I've said to friends many times, 'I wish a guy would just buy me flowers.' To me that's the most romantic thing you can do," she tells us. "But I've received flowers from a boy only once—when I was 17. If you want to get a girl's attention, call a florist. It's not hard, boys!" Miss March is also a romance-novel devotee, and her photo shoot allowed her to live out her most idyllic fantasies. "With literally buckets of fragrant roses, amaryllises and peonies on hand, along with the lacy vintage wardrobe, I swear I was channeling one of the romance-novel heroines I've loved for so many years." She smiles. "Now that I'm a Playmate, the story keeps getting better."



 Click for
more
photos



MISS MARCH

PLAYBOY'S PLAYMATE OF THE MONTH





Wherry Doris

PLAYMATE DATA SHEET

NAME: Ashley Doris

BUST: 32 C WAIST: 22" HIPS: 34"

HEIGHT: 5'5" WEIGHT: 110

BIRTH DATE: 11/1/89 BIRTHPLACE: Farmington, CT

AMBITIONS: To get my college degree, own my own real estate business and host parties as a Playmate!

TURN-ONS: A guy who understands my frisky humor and loves to get down on the dance floor with me.

TURNOFFS: Liars. Don't white-lie to make yourself seem cooler than you really are. Honesty is not only the best policy, it's SEXY!

LONGING FOR: Paramore, my all-time favorite band, to release their new CD so I can see them live on stage again!

THE PERFECT KISS IS: Moist and warm, in sync (no lizard tongue, please) and comes naturally.

MY GRAND PASSION: I love making people food at any time of day. Breakfast, lunch or dinner, you name it! It's my way of showing love. 



My boobs caught a piece of paper!



First trip to L.A. :)



Do you like my hat?





PLAYBOY'S PARTY JOKES

For a PLAYBOY sex survey we asked women if they had ever faked an orgasm. Forty-six percent responded, "Yes, yes! Oh God, yes!"

A man lived next door to a porn star. He saw her as he was leaving to go on a date and then ran into her again on the way home.

"How was your date?" she asked.

"Ugh," he replied, "I only got to first base."

The porn star commiserated, "Well, at least you got your asshole licked."

The older you get the more you enjoy things you hated as a kid—like taking naps and getting spanked.



A man was waiting at the only pay phone left in the city. He stood outside the booth for five minutes, and after noticing that the guy inside wasn't speaking into the phone, he knocked.

"Just hold on, buddy!" the man inside responded, covering the receiver. "I'm talking to my wife."

A blonde took her goldfish to the vet and told him, "I think it has epilepsy."

The vet took a look at the fish and said, "It seems calm enough to me."

The blonde responded, "Well, I haven't taken it out of the bowl yet."

PLAYBOY CLASSIC: Why don't boxers have sex before a big fight?

They don't like each other.

An awkward boy called up a girl to ask for a date. "Would you like to see a movie with me Friday?" he asked.

"Sure," she said, "but I would like to go out to dinner first."

"Okay, great!" he answered. "Tell me where you're going and when you'll be done eating so I can pick you up."

Why do dogs stick their noses in women's crotches?

Because they can.

Two homosexual men were lamenting old flames. "My ex-boyfriend, what an asshole!" the first said.

"Yeah," the second replied, "and his cock wasn't bad either."

Doc, kiss me," a woman cooed.

"I can't," he replied.

"Doc, please kiss me," she begged.

"Look, lady," the doctor said, "I probably shouldn't even be fucking you."

A survey was conducted to discover why men get out of bed in the middle of the night: Five percent said it was to drink a glass of water, 12 percent said it was to go to the bathroom, and 83 percent said it was to go home to their wives.

A man came home from work early to find his best friend on top of his wife of 23 years.

He looked despondent. He shook his head and said, "Steve, I have to, but you?"

A young man who was home from college for Easter decided to come out to his parents.

"Mom, Dad, I'm gay," he said flatly.

Silence hung over the dinner table for a few minutes before his mother piped up, "Does that mean you suck men's cocks?"

"Yeah," he answered.

She then said, "Don't you ever complain about my cooking again."



Sally Neiman

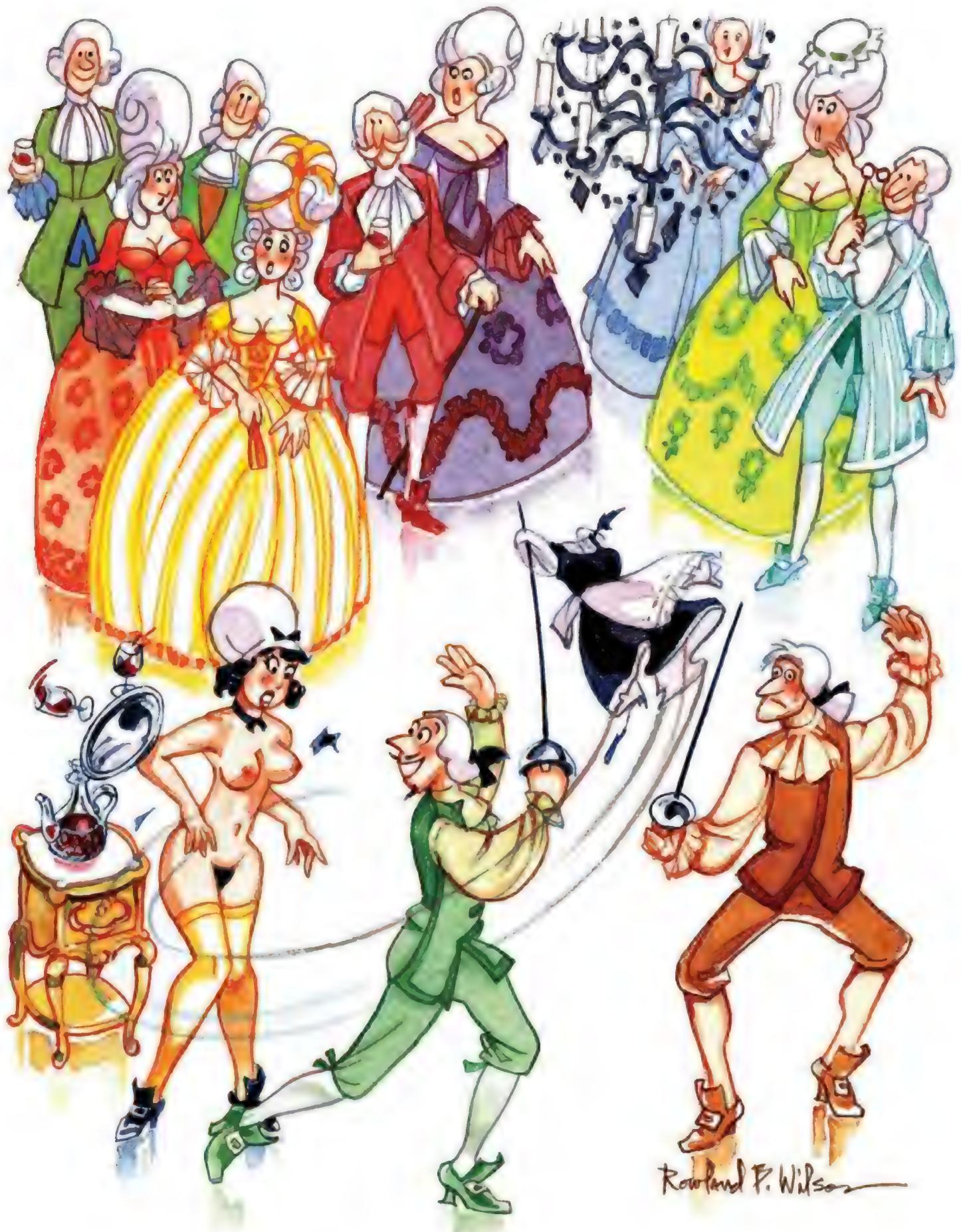
My wife and I have been playing doctor lately," a man told a friend whose marriage was in a sexual slump. "You and your wife should try it."

A few days later the man checked up on his friend to see how he was making out. "The role-playing isn't much fun," the second admitted. "The sex is the same, but now she keeps me waiting 45 minutes."

A young man who was visiting home on spring break called up an ex-girlfriend. "Are you free tonight?" he asked.

"No," she said, "but I can give you a reasonable price."

Send your jokes to Playboy Party Jokes, 9346 Civic Center Drive, Beverly Hills, California 90210, or by e-mail to jokes@playboy.com. PLAYBOY will pay \$100 to the contributors whose submissions are selected.



“...To save time, mademoiselle—I’ll be through with him in a moment!”

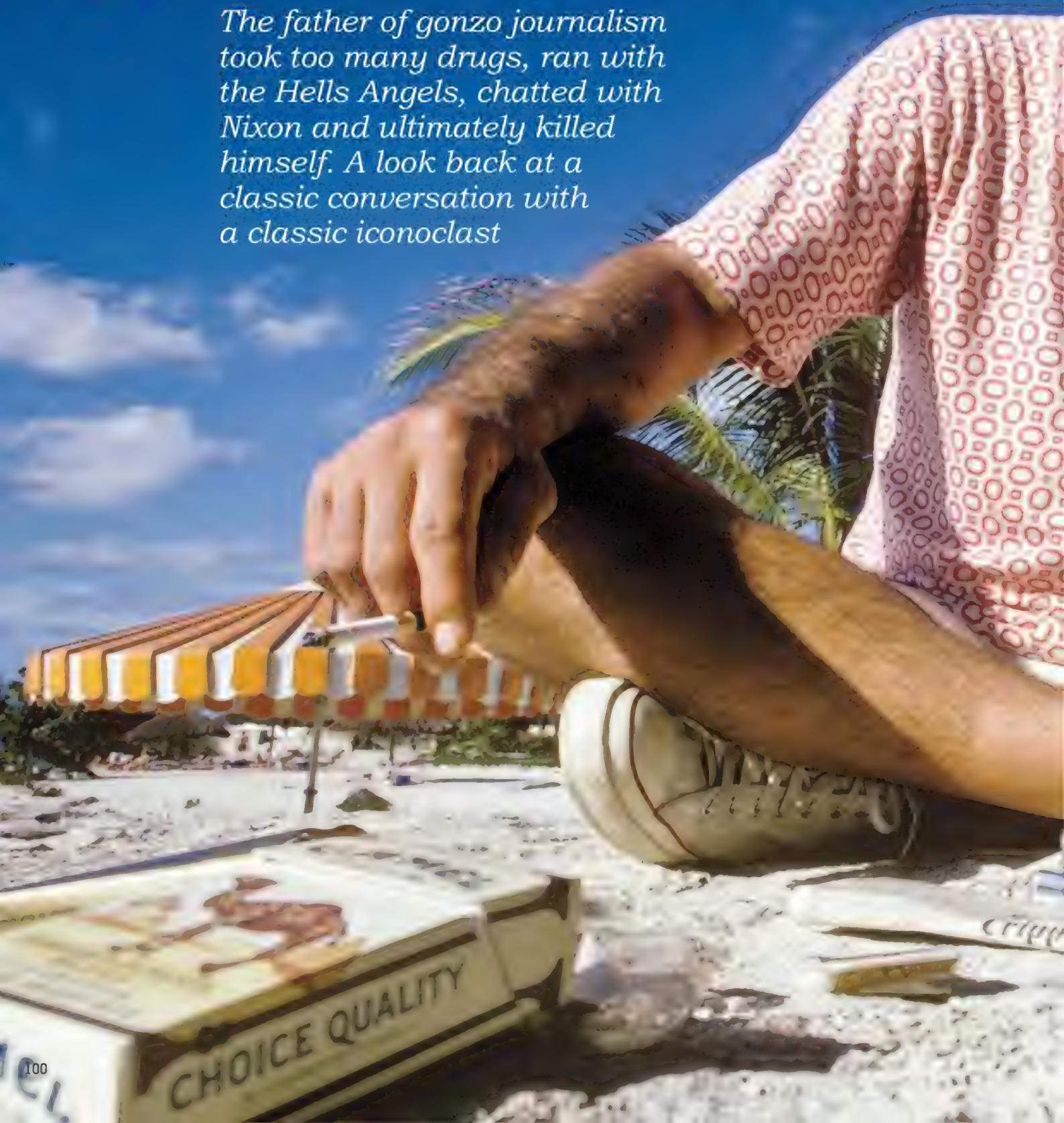
50 YEARS

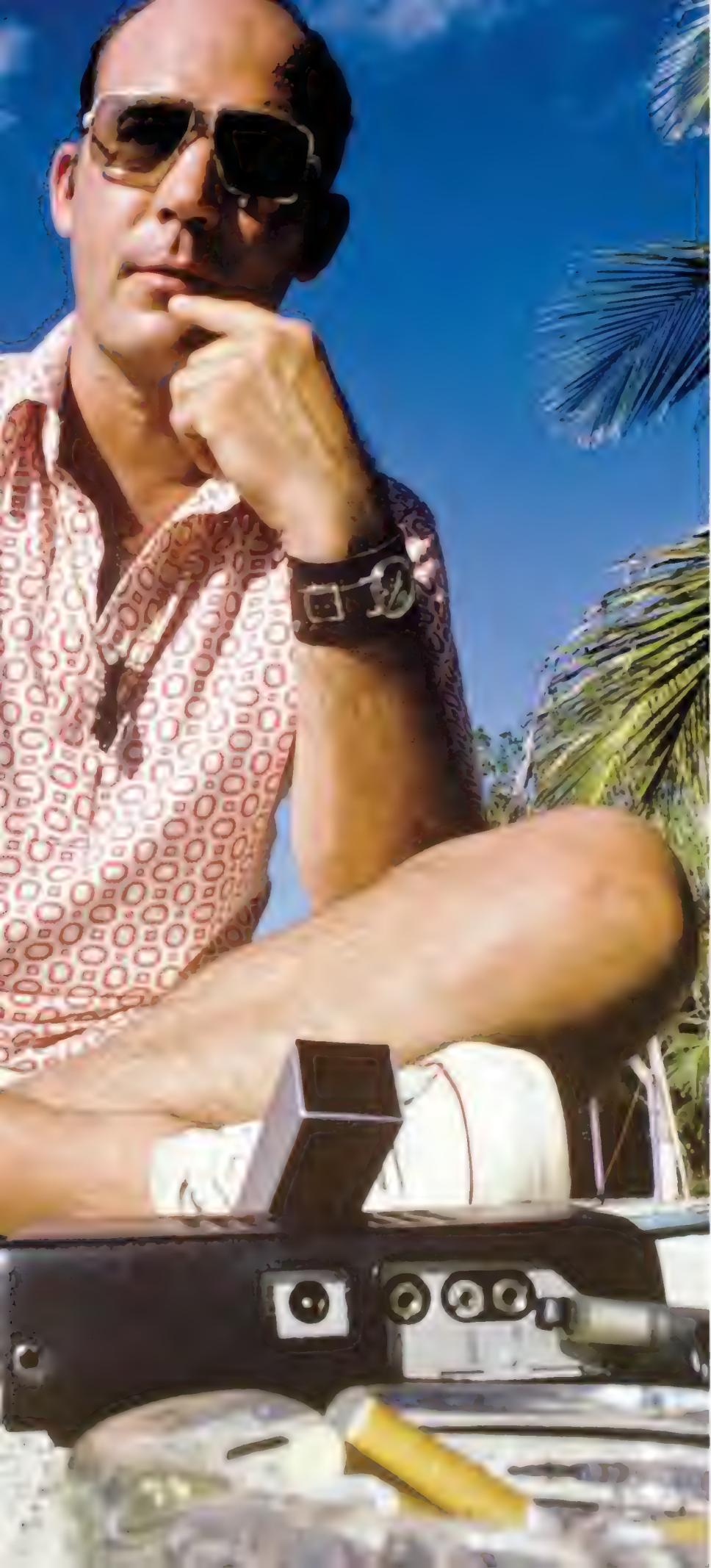
PLAYBOY
INTERVIEW



Hunter S. Thompson

The father of gonzo journalism took too many drugs, ran with the Hells Angels, chatted with Nixon and ultimately killed himself. A look back at a classic conversation with a classic iconoclast





After the journalist, politician, rogue, provocateur and unapologetic madman Hunter S. Thompson took his own life in 2005, his friends, including the actors Johnny Depp and Jack Nicholson, honored his last wishes. They fired Thompson's ashes out of a cannon. It would have been considered an unusual choice for anyone else; for Thompson it was a fittingly incendiary and irreverent send-off of a man who had spent his life exploding convention.

Thompson, who wrote for *PLAYBOY*, *Rolling Stone*, *The Nation* and other publications, had his first megahit with *Hell's Angels: The Strange and Terrible Saga of the Outlaw Motorcycle Gangs*, a book based on a year he'd spent riding with the Angels. It was the first book written in Thompson's signature style of gonzo journalism, in which the author isn't merely an observer but a participant in the stories he covers, no matter how extreme his participation becomes. Thompson pushed gonzo further in his next book, *Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas: A Savage Journey to the Heart of the American Dream*, which chronicles his drug-fueled antics as he covers a convention of district attorneys. The book is considered a classic, one of the funniest and most irreverent ever written. Soon after, Thompson became the model for Uncle Duke, a central character in Garry Trudeau's *Doonesbury* comic strip.

In 1972 Thompson went back on the road, this time to cover the presidential race between George McGovern and Richard Nixon. The result was the brilliant *Fear and Loathing: On the Campaign Trail*. Increasingly, nothing separated Thompson's life from his work. He wrote about drugs and shooting guns—and he took drugs and shot guns. He wrote about politics, and he ran for political office. (He lost a bid to become sheriff of his Colorado hometown.)

When he was 67, Thompson, who had suffered a series of ailments over the previous few years, committed suicide.

Back in 1974 *PLAYBOY* sent journalist **Craig Vetter** to interview Thompson for the November issue. In the interview Thompson extolled drugs and skewered Nixon, who, after winning the 1972 election, was embroiled in the investigation of the Watergate burglary and its cover-up. The interview was almost complete when, nine days before deadline, Nixon resigned. "We might have finished this thing like gentlemen, except for Richard Nixon, who might as well have sent the plumbers' unit to torch the entire second half, the political half, of the manuscript we have worked on so long," wrote Vetter. "All of it has had to be redone in the past few sleepless days, and it has broken the spirit of nearly everyone even vaguely involved."

PLAYBOY: Do you get off on politics the same way you get off on drugs?

THOMPSON: Sometimes. It depends on the politics, depends on the drugs...there are different kinds of highs. I had this same discussion in Mexico City one night with a guy who wanted me to do Zihuatanejo with him and get stoned for about 10 days on the finest flower tops to be had in all of Mexico. But I told him I couldn't do that; I had to be back in Washington.

PLAYBOY: That doesn't exactly fit your image as the drug-crazed outlaw journalist. Are you saying you'd rather have *(continued on page 125)*



DEATH AND MADNESS AT DIAMOND MOUNTAIN

People come from all over the world to Arizona's Diamond Mountain University, hoping to master Tibetan teachings and achieve peace of mind. For some, the search for enlightenment can go terribly wrong.

Ian Thorson was dying of dehydration on an Arizona mountaintop, and his wife, Christie McNally, didn't think he was going to make it. At six in the morning she pressed the red SOS button on an emergency satellite beacon. Five hours later a search-and-rescue helicopter thumped its way to the stranded couple. Paramedics with medical supplies rappelled off the hovering aircraft, but Thorson was already dead when they arrived. McNally required hospitalization.

The two had endured the elements inside a tiny, hollowed-out cave for nearly two months. To keep the howling winds and freak snowstorms at bay, they had dismantled a tent and covered the cave entrance with the loose cloth. Fifty yards below, in a cleft in the rock face, they had stashed a few Rubbermaid tubs filled with supplies. Even though they considered themselves Buddhists in the Tibetan tradition, an oversize book on the Hindu goddess Kali lay on the cave floor. When they moved there, McNally and Thorson saw the cave as a spiritual refuge in the tradition of the great Himalayan masters. Their plan was as elegant as it was

By Scott Carney  Illustration by Chris Buzelli



BUZELLI

treacherous: They would occupy the cave until they achieved enlightenment. They didn't expect they might die trying.

Almost irrespective of the actual spiritual practices on the Himalayan plateau, the West's fascination with all things Tibetan has spawned movies, spiritual studios, charity rock concerts and best-selling books that range from dense philosophical texts to self-help guides and methods to Buddha-fy your business. It seems as if almost everyone has tried a spiritual practice that originated in Asia, either through a yoga class, quiet meditation or just repeating the syllable *om* to calm down.

For many, the East is an antidote to Western anomie, a holistic counterpoint to our chaotic lives. We don stretchy pants, roll out yoga mats and hit the meditation cushion on the same day that we argue about our cell phone bill with someone in an Indian call center. Still, we look to Asian wisdom to center ourselves, to decompress and to block off time to think about life's bigger questions. We trust that the teachings are authentic and hold the key to some hidden truth.

We forget that the techniques we practice today in superheated yoga studios and air-conditioned halls originated in foreign lands and feudal times that would be unrecognizable to our modern eyes: eras when princely states went to war over small points of honor, priests dictated social policy and sending a seven-year-old to live out his life in a monastery was considered perfectly ordinary.

Yoga, meditation, chakra breathing and chanting are powerful physical and mental exercises that can have profound effects on health and well-being. On their own they are neither good nor bad, but like powerful life-saving drugs, they also have the potential to cause great harm. As the scholar Paul Hackett of Columbia University once told me, "People are mixing and matching religious systems like Legos. And the next thing you know, they have some fairly powerful psychological and physical practices contributing to whatever idiosyncratic attitude they've come to. It is no surprise people go insane."

No idea out of Asia has as much power to capture our attention as enlightenment. It is a goal we strive toward, a sort of perfection of the



1. Christie McNally and Ian Thorson, from their book on yoga. 2. The view of Diamond Mountain University from the area where Thorson died. 3. The entrance to the cave where Thorson and McNally spent nearly two months. 4. Michael Roach during a lecture in Arizona. 5. A chilling exchange, written during McNally's silent retreat, in which McNally addresses rumors of violence.



5. I heard there's been human blood sacrifices here. I want to run like Lot ran from Sodom and Gomorrah when I hear about stuff like this.
hmm... just a prick, I believe.

I'm not finished here, don't worry.

I heard tanks were red. Okay. I'm taking that to my grave, I promise.

soul, mind and body in which every action is precise and meaningful. For Tibetans seeking enlightenment, the focus is on the process. Americans, for whatever reason, search for inner peace as though they're competing in a sporting event. Thorson and

McNally pursued it with the sort of gusto that could break a sprinter's leg. And they weren't alone. More than just the tragedy of obscure meditators who went off the rails in nowhere Arizona, Thorson's death holds lessons (continued on page 136)



"Just because I've made it to the top, that doesn't mean it's the only position I like."



Fade In

THE FADE HAIRCUT IS BACK AND COOLER THAN EVER. HERE'S HOW TO MAKE IT WORK WITH ALL TYPES OF HAIR

• • •

Photography by
RYLAN PERRY

Illustrations by
**ELISABETH
MOCH**



Before we bust out the scissors, let's talk terminology. A "fade" haircut is one in which the hair at the sides and back of the head is cut very short—usually short enough to see the skin underneath—with the hair gradually decreasing (i.e., fading) in length, starting out long at the top of the head and ending up short near the ears and nape of the neck. The fade can be traced back to the bons vivants of the Roaring Twenties, who made it the defining do of the decade. The style has been around ever since, cycling in popularity about every 30 years, most recently with barbers across the country reporting an increased demand for the Darmody—a version worn by the eponymous character on HBO's *Boardwalk Empire*. It's obvious why the fade has never faded away: It's easy to ask for and easy to take care of, and its endless variations fit almost every hair type and face shape. Although any barber worth his pole can make the fade fit what mother nature gave you, here's what you need to know to look your dapper best. —Adam Tschorn

→ There's a reason every good barber has a blow-dryer.



THROW IN THE TOWEL

Although we're big advocates of no-fuss towel drying (completely and thoroughly, we might add—the better to let your product work its magic), a blow-dryer is an essential tool for more dramatic fade hairstyles. One virtue of the fade is that you can easily convert it from office-sleek to a party-ready pompadour.

STEP ONE

→ Dry your hair with the blow-dryer set on medium—you don't want to singe your hair.

STEP TWO

→ Rub a dime-size dollop of product between your palms and work it through your hair from the roots to the tips.

STEP THREE

→ Brush your hair up and away from the scalp while blow-drying it one more time.

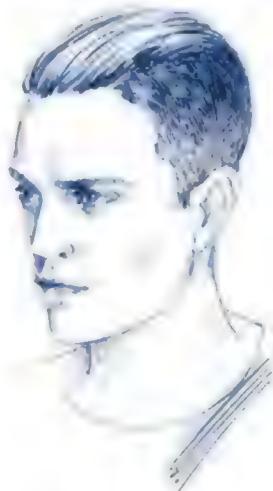
Nº 1 Hipster Fade

THE CUT

♦ Because the short hair on the sides and back of the head doesn't gradually blend into the much-longer hair on top, this style—recently repopularized by the band Arcade Fire and characters on *Boardwalk Empire*—is technically called an undercut.

HOW TO ASK FOR IT

♦ "Use a number one clipper guard, then a number two all the way to the crown; leave the top heavy but even."



Nº 2 Scissor Fade

THE CUT

♦ This is one of the most popular and versatile versions of the fade because of the not-so-severe scissored sides that make it appropriate for the office. Go David Beckham long or Adam Levine short.

HOW TO ASK FOR IT

♦ "Make the sides short without using a clipper. Keep enough height so I can style it up, like a shorter James Dean cut."



Barber Dan's
Alfonso at
Baxter Finley
in Los Angeles.



Alfonso's
exquisite
Mizutani
scissors



A restored
vintage chair at
Baxter Finley.



Nº 3

Afro Fade



THE CUT

◆ For those with tight, coily-curly Afro-textured hair. Skip the Kid 'n Play vertical version and go for the scalp-hugging low fade worn dashingly by Usher.

HOW TO ASK FOR IT

◆ "Make me look like *Men in Black* Will Smith, not *Fresh Prince* Will Smith."

Nº 4

Taper Fade



THE CUT

◆ The quintessential fade has the most fading. The hair gradually goes from scalp-short at the base to long on top.

HOW TO ASK FOR IT

◆ "I want it long enough on top so that I can slick it back. Blend it at the crown and gradually clipper down to a number one guard."

Hair Supply

Take care of that fine head of hair

WASH IT

• Go classic with **C.O. Bigelow Barber series Elixir Black** hair and body wash (\$10) scented with amber and musk, or **J.R. Liggett's bar shampoo** (\$8)—one bar gives you as many washes as a 24-ounce bottle of liquid shampoo. Follow soapsuds with suds of another sort with **Duffy's Brew Original Craft Beer E.S.B. conditioner** (\$20).

STYLE IT

• Use **Grant's pomade** (\$17) for a sleek and shiny look. Finish with a grooming brush (\$149) or folding comb (\$15) from British company **Kent**, available at groominglounge.com.

MAINTAIN IT

• Between visits to the barber, keep your sideburns trimmed with the **Wahl Chrome Pro haircutting clipper kit** (\$40). Budding barbers should invest in **44/20 thinning shears** (\$120).



Photography by SATOSHI

BETTER BAD HAIR



→ When humidity and exertion conspire against the best haircuts and products, all is not lost. For a stylish and instant solution to a bad hair day, don a goes-with-anything sleek black **director's cap** from **Gents** (\$49, gentsco.com). The elegant and authoritative low-profile design will make moisture a moot point. Use **Axe's new Reset waterless foam shampoo** (\$5) when you don't have time to shower.

01

BAXTER FINLEY

Los Angeles

• This exquisitely designed shop offers movie-star-quality cuts for an everyman 40 bucks a pop. David Beckham takes his kids here. Enough said.

baxterfinley.com

02

THE BELMONT BARBERSHOP

Chicago

• Though less than a decade old, this shop, with its self-consciously cluttered interior and taxidermied marlin hanging on the wall, is a throwback to an unfussy era of manly grooming.

belmontbarbershop.com

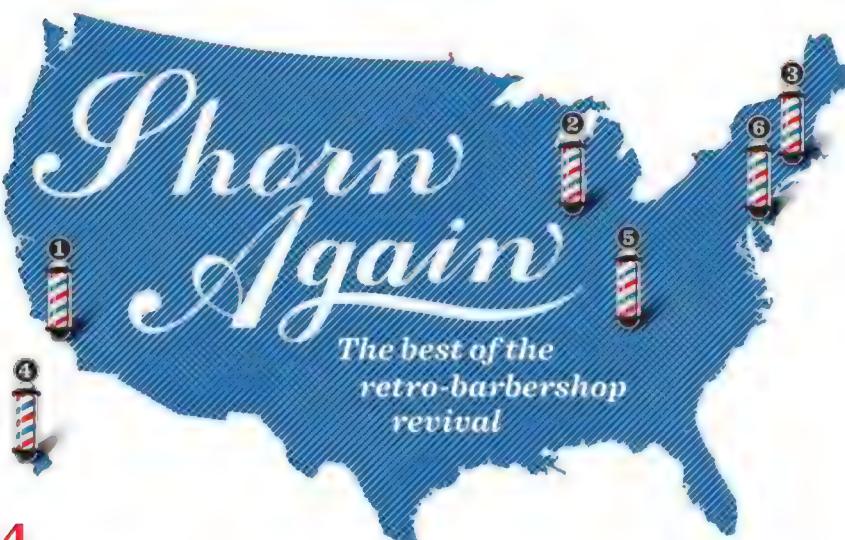
03

BLIND BARBER

New York

• A free cocktail with every haircut? We're sold. Both the original Manhattan location and the new Los Angeles outpost have speakeasies in back.

blindbarber.com



04

MOJO BARBERSHOP

Honolulu

• The owners have created a social-club-style salon where customers can enjoy flatscreen TVs, vintage magazines and cold beer in Honolulu's Chinatown.

mojobarbershop.com

05

FRANK'S BARBERSHOP

Knoxville

• Dartboards and dark wood give this spot a confident masculine vibe we like when a dude's using a straight razor on us.

franksbarbershop.net

06

2B GROOMED STUDIOS

Philadelphia

• In addition to classic cuts and a vintage 1940s vibe, this barbershop offers traditional straight-razor shaves.

2bgroomedstudios.com

FADE OUT

Two fade haircuts to avoid at all costs (unless it's Halloween)

Nº 5

The Situation

• There are some versions of the fade to evade, and the Situation's situation is Exhibit A. His cut doesn't blend from clipper to scissor length until so high on the crown it borders on faux-hawk territory. Plus, it's too short on top to sweep away from the forehead without creating a gelled cowlick halfway back.



Nº 6

Vanilla Ice

• What really puts Rob Van Winkle's onetime trademark do on the do-not-resuscitate list is the trio of shaved horizontal lines spanning his sidewalls. Leave the stars and stripes to Old Glory and tattoo artists and keep your head a graffiti-free zone.



HOLD, PLEASE



Nothing ruins a primo haircut like bad product. Skip stiff and shiny gel and use one of the following.

CLAY

→ The matte finish makes this good for providing hold while keeping hair looking natural. Try **Sebastian Craft Clay** (\$20).

FIBER

→ Use **American Crew Fiber** (\$15) to build texture and volume in thinner hair and give a medium shine.

PASTE

→ Paste gives a softer hold you can rework throughout the day. **Supremo Magic Move** (\$25) comes in varieties formulated for all hair types.

POMADE

→ Older brands are oil or wax based, but newer water-based brands such as **Mitch by Paul Mitchell** (\$20) wash out easily. The shiniest of the bunch.



The Language of Lingerie

AN EROTIC GUIDE TO ALL
THINGS SILKY AND SHEER

We all know men are enchanted by a woman in lingerie, but most are flummoxed as to exactly why. Men tend not to talk of frills, lace or silk, but on a beautiful woman it's a language they instantly speak. To explore this conundrum, we decamped to a grand mansion on the outskirts of Prague with a Victoria's Secret photographer, a Hollywood fashion stylist and three beautiful women. We brought trunks of silk stockings, garter belts, corsets, camisoles and other diaphanous delicacies to both conceal and reveal the beauty of the female form. On these pages you'll witness what we uncovered and learn what you

need to know the next time you're in the market for something unmentionable for the woman—or women—in your life. To assist us, we recruited stylist Jonas Hallberg, who has made beauties such as Megan Fox,

Jessica Alba and Scarlett Johansson all the more beautiful in magazines and on the red carpet. This is a guy we trust,

and you should too. "The point of lingerie," says Hallberg, "is

to help a woman be comfortable with her body, while also making her feel and look sexier and more glamorous." And yes, you're going to have to splurge. "Think of it as an investment," says Hallberg, "one that

will pay off for both of you in the end."

PHOTOGRAPH BY
Michael Bernard





Bare Necessities

When less is more

A woman's beauty is at its purest without excessive adornment and unnecessary layers. A diamond choker brings out the sparkle in her eyes. Simple thigh-high stockings in basic black cover just enough but don't distract. "If you're a real playboy," says Hallberg, "you have money. Spend a lot of it on a very few things, such as stockings and a Tiffany or Harry Winston diamond necklace."

Stocking Options

The thighs have it

Black thigh-high stockings highlight the curves of a leg, leaving just a flash of skin at the top. While the long seam down the back is an old-fashioned flourish in this day and age, the way it traces the exquisite contour of the thigh and calf is an anachronism to be embraced. Slip-on heels are designed to be kicked off.



Opposite page:
\$350, by Agent Provocateur. Back seam lace-back thigh-high, \$14, by Frederick's of Hollywood.

Opposite page:
Scallop-toe thigh-highs, \$14, by Frederick's of Hollywood.



Damson corset,
\$590, by **Agent Provocateur**.
Essential sheer
stockings, \$14
for two pairs, by
Frederick's of
Hollywood.



Stay the Corset

Invest to undress

"The corset is possibly the most powerful piece of lingerie," says Hallberg. "It looks hot and sexy on any woman, no matter if they're skinny, medium or extra large." And if the art of the striptease is about the delayed reveal, the corset is the ultimate in access denied—albeit momentarily. Until access is granted, the garment's structured shape accentuates the svelte hourglass contours of the torso. It can be kinky, it can be empowering, but above all it can be a dare to both people to continue to figure out their roles in the game that ensues....



Tie It Together *A top-to-bottom tip sheet*

No. 1 LACE OFF

To unlace a corset, a woman needs a helper. It could be you...or it could be a third party.

No. 2 EN GARTER

Garter belts keep thigh-high stockings from sliding down. Unclipping them adds to the drama of the moment, underscoring the fact that all lingerie is a puzzle of sorts, a mystery that leads to the question: How does this thing come off, and who is going to do it?

No. 3 HEEL

A good pair of stiletto pumps adds height and conveys power. The high heels push the hips back and the calves out. Shoes can count as a sort of lingerie in their own right.



MODEL STANDING:
Damson corset, \$590,
by **Agent Provocateur**.

Essential sheer
stockings, \$14 for two
pairs, by **Frederick's of Hollywood**.

MODEL SITTING: Damson
suspender brief, \$190,
by **Agent Provocateur**.



You Are Sheer

The lace up your sleeve

A lace robe or camisole represents everything we love about lingerie. It can be kinky or innocent, depending on how a woman wears it. Above all, it's transparent. "Lace harkens back to the golden age of Hollywood—Rita Hayworth, Ava Gardner and Marilyn Monroe," says Hallberg. "It's timeless and more right than ever."





ARAB SPRING

(continued from page 66)

proclaimed commander of the faithful and donned a chaste white caftan, the traditional woolen tunic, while allowing his subjects to continue to live in a land where anything goes. Marrakech, a rose-red city on the Sahara's edge, is where former International Monetary Fund head Dominique Strauss-Kahn sated his lust, and even the normally temperate *Financial Times* chose the city as the site of its luxury conference. Islamists in Morocco find themselves the butt of secular ridicule, not least from the leaders of a movement for Berber rights who promote their indigenous, pre-Islamic culture, decry Arabic as an Eastern colonial implant and call themselves "beer-beristes" to emphasize their rejection of Islam's prohibition of alcohol. The bars at the back of the bourse in Casablanca, the country's commercial capital on the shores of the Atlantic, seem to bask in more red lights than Amsterdam. Down the coast, past the mammoth Hassan II Mosque, one of the largest in the world, lies what may be the Muslim Arab world's only transvestite bar, Le Village, run as a family business. Lady-boys in bras gyrate to African women banging tom-toms between their legs.

"What does he think of us?" I ask Latifa, a filmmaker by day and my guide through Morocco's seedier side by night, as she hands the keys of her sports car to a valet garbed in a peasant's scruffy tunic. "That you're a Western source of corruption, and I'm your *pute*," she replies, languidly wrapping an arm over my shoulder to leave no room for doubt.

Yet even here there is the furtive pitter-patter of the killjoy's advance. The kingdom's new Islamist prime minister, Abdelilah Benkirane, entered politics by campaigning for the contestants in a local beauty pageant to replace their swimsuits with woolly caftans, turning their hour-glass figures into body bags and hooding their hair. The intervening years have mellowed him into a merrier swashbuckler. His information minister marked Women's Day by giving his female employees a box of chocolates and a red rose, and his justice minister likes women so much he married two. But "immodest" women still make Benkirane flinch. He reduced the number of women in his cabinet from his predecessor's relatively profligate seven to a cautious one, whom he predictably appointed to head a women's affairs ministry. At his inauguration ceremony in January 2012, Benkirane accused a bareheaded female journalist seeking an interview of molesting him.

And though government officials insist they will not formally apply Islamic law for now, they are eagerly looking for alternatives to tourism—or "sex travel" in the words of a Moroccan official—the kingdom's foreign-currency mainstay. In an attempt to rein in the country's avid

bikini culture, a relic of Morocco's former French rule, Benkirane's justice minister won a legal battle to allow veils at the beach. "The king has 23 palaces," he says. "At least let us have sand castles." On Fridays, prayer mats jostle for space with beach towels. "Forsake not God's law on the beaches," rants a bearded doomsayer who stalks bathers at Mehdia, a popular resort north of Rabat. "O faithful, bare not your nudity." The sermon of Abd Al Samad Mirdas, a Casablanca preacher, reverberates from a car radio, likening women to devils.

•

Morocco's Kulturkampf is mild compared with that of Tunisia, 1,000 miles to the east, as it lurches from fundamental secularism to fundamental Islam. Though he ousted the French colonialists, Tunisia's first president, Habib Bourguiba, preserved their values with relish. He banned core Islamic practices such as the veil and polygamy and discouraged fasting during the holy month of Ramadan. Unique in the Arab world, women in tight-fitting jeans frisk men at airport security check-ins. Bourguiba's successor, a dour policeman named Zine al-Abidine Ben Ali, took subservience to Europeans one stage further, prostituting his subjects to their whims. His beaches served up "bezness boys" to offer relief to aging white women. (The French guidebook *Routard* helpfully lists where to find them.) And investors developed the southern isle of Djerba, where, legend has it, the "honey-sweet fruit of the lotus" seduced the mariners in Homer's *Odyssey* and, in more recent years, seedy bars help Europeans retracing the epic achieve a similar "state of lethargic bliss."

Two years after chasing out Ben Ali, Tunisians remain torn between their desire for liberation from European bondage and dire necessity. Tourism, which plays a major role in the country's economy, declined 30 percent in the revolution's first year. In the Place de l'Indépendance, the heart of the capital city of Tunis, a stone likeness of the medieval Tunisian philosopher Ibn-Khaldūn—perhaps the Arab world's greatest thinker—stands encircled by armored cars and webs of barbed wire, pondering in which direction to turn. Just as Bedouin tribesmen burst out of Arabia in Khaldūn's time, today Islamist hordes from the East seem poised to overthrow a value system cultivated in the West.

In the flea market that straddles the tracks where the last train arrived in the city of Menzel Bourguiba two decades ago, a former cave mate of Osama bin Laden's sells scarlet-colored women's panties. Musab is tall, diffident and prematurely old. He has an apologetic smile, wears a black leather jacket over a red shirt and takes a shine to my guide, Farida, an unveiled female journalist who, like Musab, had fled Ben Ali's dictatorship and returned to her hometown only

after his departure. Both had also spent time in Europe, where Farida discovered the secular highlights of Paris, and Musab, after dabbling in drugs, met a Belgian imam—before meeting Bin Laden in a Kandahar cave. In 2001, following the U.S.-led toppling of the Taliban, he was captured, held at a Pakistani military base and extradited to a Tunisian jail. He escaped in a breakout that followed Ben Ali's overthrow in January 2011.

Though mild and understated, Musab is a hero to local unemployed kids who wear military fatigues and sport bum-fluff beards as old as the revolution. Anwar, his aide-de-camp, a sort of Sancho Panza to Musab's Don Quixote, operates his own perfumery opposite Musab's stall and runs a sideline in fashionable sequined face veils. Like Saint Augustine of Hippo, another North African rake turned eremite, Anwar found God after tiring of a life of debauchery. His youth is evocative of that of Black Hand, an illegal immigrant immortalized in "Clandestino," a Manu Chao song beloved across Tunisia for depicting the fate so many share. Like Black Hand, Anwar reached "Babylon, a northern city," after traveling across the sea in a dinghy. He survived by trading cocaine, until one day an imam from an Italian mosque in Turin saved him. Following the flight of Ben Ali and his security apparatus, Musab and Anwar acquired a following that they fashioned into a morality squad. They wrested control of Menzel's main mosque, warded off looters (who had torched the local bank) and harangued a local bar until it stopped selling alcohol.

Few towns reflect the ebb and flow of Tunisia's fortunes more than Menzel Bourguiba. The French called it Ferryville, after the 19th century French prime minister and imperialist who considered it his "duty to civilize inferior races" and turn their coastline into naval bases. After independence, Tunisia's first president, Bourguiba, called it his home—in Arabic, *Menzel Bourguiba*. In keeping with his love of French customs, he kept its provincial French air. Cast-iron railings still enclose prim bungalows; in the graveled central square gardeners manicure the shrubs that circle a bandstand and whitewash the trunks of geometrically positioned plane trees; old codgers still play *boules* in their shade.

But since the revolution, Musab's ideology—that of jihadi Salafism, which espouses holy war to re-create the world of the prophet Muhammad—has challenged that decorum. Having conquered Menzel Bourguiba, his Salafis are now targeting nearby Bizerte, northern Tunisia's largest city, which was once famed for its relaxed secular ways. The city's Monoprix grocery store (part of the French supermarket chain) was torched for its commercial ties to Ben Ali's family. It has reopened—but only after liquor was removed from its shelves. Bizerte's red-light district lies abandoned; bootleggers



"I'd ask you in, but I have to be at work shortly or my pimp'll be furious."

and pimps have fled underground. Fewer women venture out unveiled. Even the Islamist movement, Ennahda, which won recent elections in Tunisia, is worried about the new antidemocratic and misogynist radicalism of the Salafis. A banner flutters from the balustrade of the local Ennahda office, reminding fellow Islamists that half the population is female and that the other half emerged from them.

Back in Tunis, bons vivants drink to forget. A rare sight in the Arab world: By mid-afternoon the bars brim with women as well as men, the tables laden with beer bottles. In the Red Light Salon de Thé on downtown's Avenue de la Liberté, couples smooch around small arabesque coffee tables beneath neon signs of silhouetted naked girls holding the words *Red Light District—Amsterdam*. Girlfriends pet lovers, and waitresses in velvet waistcoats chase customers around the tables. On weekends, fathers take their families to La Plaza, a resort restaurant in a suburb of Tunis. While their children splash in its bayside pool, the men sneak into the disco below, where girls wrap themselves around them like ivy around drainpipes, licking and fawning over their fares. Disheveled drunks keel over onto the floor with their whiskey bottles. "Nothing has changed," says the doorman when I ask about the advancing Islamist wave.

Yet conversations inevitably return to the obscurantist threat advancing through the provinces. Newspapers report that in Jendouba, a town 100 miles to the west of the capital, Salafis in starched white tunics chased away the police, imposed Saudi-style laws and sliced off the hand of a suspected thief. The nearby town of Sedjenane, Musab tells me, had declared itself an Islamic emirate and converted the town hall into a sin-bin for drunkards. Like the Fatimids (Islamist upstarts who used Tunisia as a base to conquer North Africa a millennium ago), these moralists consider Tunisia the launchpad for their future theocracy.

"The problem is that they just don't get laid," says Amina, who makes candles for boutique hotels, as we chat in Le Light, the elite's cocktail bar in the Villa Donna hotel. "They need a fuck." Others think the solution is less simple. Farida, who drove me to Menzel Bourguiba in her sports car, calls Amina and her Westernized ilk the Last of the Mohicans. She fears that her own nighttime clubbing is a swan song and has kept her apartment in Paris, she says, just in case.

Even in the capital, the new Islamism seeps through the cracks. CD stalls in the market not far from the statue of the sagacious Ibn-Khaldūn have stopped playing Western pop after reports that one had been torched for "distracting Muslims from the mosque." As a precaution, the fruit-juice shacks broadcast Koranic chants, and in a city where only a few years ago a veil was cause for official suspicion, *jilbabs* (head scarves) are commonplace. During the first Ramadan since the revolution about half the restaurants closed for lunch, up from 10 percent a year earlier.

And the tranquil and well-to-do village of La Marsa—its picturesque jumble of pale blue-and-white plaster walls perched precariously over a turquoise bay frequented by French impressionists—has become the unlikely front line for a cultural showdown on the edge of the capital.

It began when Lofti El Hafi, La Marsa's bookseller, impishly decorated the window of his shop with volumes of *Les Femmes au Bain*, a collection of nude paintings with bare-breasted beauties on its cover. When an angry Islamist passerby took offense, El Hafi was initially sympathetic. "It's just the early buds of freedom," he explains, attributing the protest that followed to a hothead from the nearby working-class suburb of Al Karm who had returned from jihad in Iraq a trifle deranged. Like Musab, the rabble-rouser had recently emerged from Ben Ali's jails. El Hafi moved the books to a back shelf out of deference—and at the urging of the police. Anyway, he adds, putting a brave face on the intrusion, "the attention was good for sales."

But a few weeks later the hothead was back with hundreds of other hotheads in the art center next to the bookshop, pounding at the gates of an exhibition that ridiculed the Islamists' rise. One art-

by the veils. "Get back to the dark ages," yelled the bareheads.

In an attempt to pacify an increasingly polarized population, the new Islamist government tries to reassure everyone with doublespeak. Fearful of scaring off tourists, Prime Minister Hamadi Jebali has inaugurated tourism conferences where alcohol flows liberally. But his ministers speak of quarantining tourists in resorts turned into ghettos guarded by checkpoints—thus protecting Muslim innocents from contamination by debauched Europeans. (A World Bank official calls this "market segmentation.") Others court Gulf investment for halal, or religiously pure, tourism, which has already funded the construction of a vast but drab alcohol-free and disco-less entertainment complex on land reclaimed from Tunis's estuary. Next summer, predict hoteliers, some Tunisian beaches could be segregated.

The authorities are also quietly engineering a cleanup of the capital's media—they detained a newspaper publisher and an editor for printing a photo of a German-Tunisian soccer star cupping his naked girlfriend's breasts—along with its brothels. Sex workers in Tunis say police told them Jebali's government has declared Friday, the Muslim holy day, and Ramadan, the Muslim holy month, as times of rest. One Friday I visited Tunis's officially authorized red-light zone on Abdallah Guech Street, near the dilapidated former Venetian consulate where I lived in the late 1980s. The red-light district has survived, despite attacks by Molotov-cocktail-wielding Islamists within weeks of President Ben Ali's flight. The muezzin was broadcasting his call for prayer, and all but a few of the scores of booths that open onto the alleyway were tightly shut. At one of the open doors, a peroxided woman wearing slacks and clipping her toenails shooed me away before the beards found us. At another, a bawdier madam stopped washing the red tints in her hair, ushered me hurriedly into her cabin and offered me an alternative place to prostrate for 20 dinars.

A minority of Tunisians are striking back at what they perceive as an alliance between two shades of Islamists—the government's statist version and the more antiestablishment Salafis—to quash the last fires of hedonism. An indignantly risqué magazine, *Femmes de Tunisie*, aspires to spawn a sexual revolution by sporting a front cover with a seductress wearing nothing but 1920s pearls and by offering women advice on the best way to chuck unsatisfying lovers. Farida plans a protest of her own: a trip to the beach with her girlfriends all kitted out in "le string"—their skimpiest thongs. And a wave of new bars and cabarets are opening across Tunis—including Le Regent, behind the Ministry of the Interior, where a husky-voiced woman sings and acts out the lyrics to Randy Newman's "You Can Leave Your Hat On." At the Peace and Love nightclub on the capital's outskirts, waiters in bow ties bear champagne ice buckets across the dance floor between Tunis's lithest bodies. Above them a DJ projects lewd images onto a giant screen to

A minority of Tunisians are striking back at what they perceive as an alliance between two shades of Islamists to quash the last fires of hedonism.

ist had painted God's name as an army of ants; another had stuck images of women's faces on punching bags and strung them inside a boxing ring. Thanks to Twitter, secular activists quickly formed a counter-demonstration. While police were busy trying to separate the protesters, the Salafis torched the police station. That evening, authorities imposed the first curfew since the revolution and rounded up dozens.

Efforts to find middle ground have largely backfired. An attempt by President Moncef Marzouki, a former human rights activist, to host a joint workshop for operators of Islamist Facebook pages (which have hundreds of thousands of fans) and their rival secular bloggers (who muster just a few hundred) degenerated into farce. The Islamists walked out after Jolanare—the lecturer and blogger—accused them of treating women like *jawari*, or concubines. At Manouba University in the capital, phalanxes of bareheaded versus fully veiled women clashed after Salafi toughs ejected the dean from his office for banning women from wearing the *niqab*, a covering that hides a woman's face as well as her hair. "You can't make me free if you take away my rights," read the placards carried

frighten off the Islamists: Photos of a pole dancer, a bikinied bum and the turntable are interspersed with images of a woman's tongue and the words *Lick my deck*; a crab with stiletto legs for claws entraps its prey. For a few raucous hours there's not a head scarf in sight.

After the Maghreb's fleshpot safe havens, the public space in post-Qaddafi Libya feels sexless and arid. Along with millions of migrant workers, the Moroccan girls who worked at Tripoli's nightclubs fled the fighting that toppled the colonel. The rebels who took Qaddafi's place claimed their legitimacy in part by highlighting their godliness over the colonel's perversions (including his attempt to create heaven on earth with a harem of 72 female bodyguards).

Yet the rebels have proved to be strangely prone to temptation, as I discovered on a flight from Tripoli to Kufra, a trading post 800 miles deep in the Sahara. Libya's initial revolutionary leadership, the National Transitional Council, appropriated Qaddafi's private jet, which came with cream-colored leather sofas and the services of a beautiful and curvaceous flight attendant, Ayad Abdel-Rahman. Even the Islamists on board found it hard not to drool over her tall, slender form, her doe eyes and her crimson skirt cut above the knee. Ten pairs of male eyes followed her between the sofas as she prepared and served three-course meals. Unlike her previous employer, we were clearly not worthy of her attention. "He would never get angry," she recalls wistfully. "He wasn't as wild as you people say."

Other Libyans are also trying to secure their share of the colonel's assets and rebalance 42 years of unequal distribution of pleasure. Libya's militiamen have yet to disband—a reality all too vividly revealed by the killing of Chris Stevens, America's ambassador to Libya and perhaps its most engaging diplomat, in his Benghazi safe house. When they are not busy targeting foreigners, they prey on the former palaces of the colonel's offspring and sycophants, daubing their walls with the words *Holy Property* in an effort to give their theft religious legitimacy. In the vestibule of the Tripoli mansion of Qaddafi's daughter, guards lounge on the love seat she had commissioned in the form of a golden mermaid with a face cast in her image. South of Tripoli, another militia guards the hunting pavilions and leopard zoo where the Qaddafi family spent its weekends. Ten-foot-long Russian missiles poke through the long grass. West of the capital, Libya's Berber fighters use their newfound status and arms to fend off Salafi party poopers who seek to disrupt their frolics on isolated beaches with "fiancées" and bootlegged whiskey. As in Morocco, they dismiss such Islamist intrusions as cultural colonialism and use their control of the western border to smuggle Djerba's prostitutes in for the night. And at their all-female wedding parties, *zamzamat*—female troubadours smelling of whiskey

and hashish—regale the bride with their ululations and tambourines.

Even so, such are Libya's desert rigors that the sight of Alexandria—the first city to the east of the country—left me feeling almost as excited as Antony, the Roman general, arriving in the ancient port to court Cleopatra, the Egyptian queen who staved off Roman conquest by conquering her invaders in bed. Behind generations of grime, Alexandria's stately buildings and antique drinking parlors still ooze the decadence of their louche 19th century colonial patrons. The restored opera house, palaces and royal seat of government offer a window on the sensual past of what Lawrence Durrell, a British wartime agent, novelist and husband to two of Alexandria's offspring, called his "dream city." The Sporting Club—the city's colonial hub, which

another Alexandria denizen, E.M. Forster, described as "tennis courts thronged by day, brothels by night"—still tries to exude exclusivity. Wizened waiters in green velvet smoking jackets and bow ties serve drinks on silver platters in the clubhouse, gardeners mow croquet lawns with the care of barbers, and only the flutter of polished leather disturb the quiet in the library as elderly members slumber on sofas, their pates glistening beneath the chandeliers sparkling overhead.

Fleeing Europe's economic crisis, the city's Greeks, who numbered 150,000 before the 1952 revolution, have begun trickling back, tempted by a city where their pensions are actually worth something. In the marina's Greek club behind the Qaitbay Fort, John Siokas, a leader in the Greek community, has opened a restaurant serving *chtapodi xydato*—grilled octopus—and has plans to turn a dance hall favored by



"I'll have to call you back, dear. My secretary is trying to get my attention."

Egypt's last king, the debauched Farouk, into a nightclub called Fever. "Alex is Europe, Cairo is Africa," explains a taxi driver when I ask him why Alexandria, unlike the capital Cairo, seems to have rediscovered its *joie de vivre* since President Hosni Mubarak's 2011 fall, despite the Salafi surge. "Half its population," he adds by way of embellishment, "are the offspring of Greek, Jewish, Cypriot, Italian, Armenian and English bastards. A Western temperament is in their genes."

That said, the latest arrivals are outnumbered by the departures. Since the bombing of an Alexandrian church in 2011, the exodus of Copts, one of the Arab world's oldest Christian communities, has accelerated. Salafis, complains the Sporting Club's *maitre d'*, are defying the board's efforts to exclude them, with as much insistence as the Egyptian revolutionaries who in 1952 nationalized the exclusive British club and made themselves members. The club demolished its bar in the 1980s, built its first mosque a decade later and recently stopped horse racing on its grounds under pressure from opponents of gambling. Peer pressure has reduced displays of supposed licentiousness such as bikinis, female gymnastics and swimming

for girls over the age of 14. And from the royal box where the playboy King Farouk once frolicked with his mistresses, a female professor from Egypt's Islamic Al-Azhar University lectures on family values. "The colonial past means nothing; it's gone," says a Salafi member of the club who works as a lawyer to secure permission for speculators to tear down the facades of the last colonial villas and erect faceless towers in their place. Revolutionaries who torched the city land-registry office have given his business a boost.

Where they have not swept away Alexandria's history, Salafis sternly ignore it. Karmouz, a poor neighborhood where Salafis rule, has built a high wall around Pompey's Pillar, the giant ancient column that stands among the ruins of the pagan temple of Serapis, a Greco-Egyptian god of the underworld. A local Salafi preacher whom I persuaded to join me on a tour beat a hasty retreat when we stumbled across a sculpture of a ram's head in a shrine dug into the rock beneath the pillar.

And yet after two months of traveling between liberals and Salafis, I began to wonder whether I had misread North Africa's

Salafi school. Launched in Alexandria by five students from the city's medical college, was it just another of the fertility cults the city had spawned over the centuries? Far from frowning on sex, as their Western counterparts might, they enjoy a spicy alternative form. The black covers hide a secret world of sexuality. Drawn from the Koran, the Salafi vision of paradise is an epicurean's delight, promising an afterlife spent reclining on jeweled couches, served by dark-eyed houris with swelling breasts and immortal youths whose cups overflow with wine. Ibn Kathir, a stern-faced 14th century Syrian exegete whose Koranic commentaries are a fundamentalist's gospel, describes an orgiastic paradise of girls whose "breasts are fully rounded, not sagging." According to Jalaluddin al-Suyuti, an Egyptian expositor who died in 1505, "Each time we sleep with a houri we find her virgin, the erection eternal, and sensation of lovemaking so delicious that were you to experience it in this world you would faint. Each chosen one [i.e., Muslim male] will marry 70 houris, besides the women he married on earth, and all will have appetizing vaginas."

The absence of female flesh on the streets, Salafi men told me, only increases the desire to uncover at night. Indeed, Salafi preachers see sex everywhere. The campaign fliers for the handful of Salafi women standing for election in Egypt substituted roses for their faces. (The women were relegated to the bottom of the party list to protect voters' highly charged appetites. Women, like Christians, says a spokesman for the movement, could not be ministers since neither could dominate Muslim men.) Salafis proscribe some inanimate objects too, allegedly issuing fatwas against markets that display sexually suggestive items such as eggplants and sliced watermelon. A shop assistant in Mondiana's, perhaps the largest in a row of downtown Cairo's notoriously risqué lingerie stores, says 40 percent of his customers are Salafis, a percentage that is larger than their share of the total population. In the shop window, crotchless fishnet tights jostle for pride of place with gossamer-thin see-through panties and knickers with only a string at the front and back for covering.

Salafi manuals that have sprouted on the sidewalks outside North Africa's mosques provide the most intimate details on sharia-compliant lovemaking. ("In God's name," the groom should pronounce when he consummates his marriage.) Mehdi Boushaib, a religious graduate from the University of al-Karaouine, Morocco's premier divinity college, runs a stall in Casablanca's bazaar that offers homemade aphrodisiacs. Based on the recipes he learned from a quack who abandoned her own stall for Paris, he recommends *bouwa*—powdered chameleon—as an alternative to Viagra. Roast it on burning coals, raise your tunic over its fumes and smoke your genitalia for 20 minutes, he instructs. Then shower, sleep and wait for your genie to rise from its slumber.

Across North Africa I stumbled on Salafi acolytes who had repented for their





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bezzness-boy lifestyles only to find fulfilment in the strangely dissolute Salafi code of conduct. Anwar, the former drug trafficker, attracted male recruits with the promise of God-given rights to polygamy and *muta*, a temporary "pleasure" marriage that opponents condemn as prostitution. Sympathetic sociologists note that *muta* offers a much-needed release for lovers unable to marry because of the prohibitive cost of housing and wedding ceremonies. Tunisia's Center for Research, Studies, Documentation and Information on Women recorded unprecedented growth in the practice, particularly on college campuses, after the 2011 revolution. In northern Tunisia a Salafi-run paper, *al-Jala*, helpfully gives a rundown of the doctors offering the best "virginity recovery services."

In a related bid for popular support that his followers considered a liberalization, Libya's first post-Qaddafi leader, Mustafa Abdel-Jalil, lifted the colonel's ban on marrying four wives in the same speech in which he declared the country liberated. Cheering the move, Salafi preachers took to their pulpits insisting that polygamy provides a critical social service in a country with tens of thousands of new war widows. Ezzedine Arafa, a short, balding chemistry professor who recently returned to Libya from Scotland, praises the new order for licensing his polygamous dating agency, something the Qaddafi regime repeatedly refused to do. I found him one Saturday afternoon in his office situated above the courtyard of a 19th century Tripoli mosque replete with a gently spitting fountain. "Write what sort of girl you want—tall or fat, young or mature," he says, handing me a form. Having surveyed my own vital statistics, he advises me that my prospects are fair. In his first two months of operations, he signed on 120 women and just 30 men.

Indeed, sometimes I find myself wondering whether it is the liberals or the Salafis who are leading the morality campaign. Secular gynecologists blame Salafi pleasure marriages for a spike in teenage abortions. Students, a Tunisian doctor tells me, are being lured into fleeting relationships based on assurances written on a

sheet of paper that claim their marriages are underwritten by God. I met another gynecologist in Alexandria's Cap d'Or mirror bar who was celebrating the end to another lucrative week repairing veiled women's hymens. And secular Egyptian editors reduced a Salafi parliamentarian to a laughingstock after he was alleged to have taken Sama al-Masri, one of Egypt's more riotous belly dancers with a bouncy cleavage, as a second wife. (His Salafi colleagues, seemingly more exercised about the plastic surgery he had on his bulbous but God-given nose, stripped him of parliamentary immunity for unwarranted interference with the creator's handiwork.)

By the time I reached Cairo, I realized I was becoming increasingly titillated by alternative Salafi tendencies. Fearing for my sanity, an American journalist advised me to seek refuge in Cairo's Jazz Club, but that only added to my confusion. On a small stage, a live band crooned such dulcet melodies as "I fuck this, I fuck that, I ram my cock into her twat." With no veil of decency to hide behind, I ducked for cover behind my laptop screen, only to be accosted by Kim, a Californian aid worker and part-time preventer of morality and purveyor of vice. Promising to replace my laptop with lap-dancing, she led me to the Armada, a Nile cruiser turned discotheque, for a further assault on any vestige of adherence to Salafi values.

My final stop, in beleaguered Gaza, was intended to offer an antidote. Once the ancient crossroads of Africa and Asia and a locus of cross-fertilization, over the past decade it has been forced into splendid isolation by the construction of Egyptian and Israeli walls. Locked behind these portcullises, 1.7 million people live under the rugged rule of Hamas, the Islamist movement that won power through a combination of ballots and bullets in 2006 and 2007. It has clung to power religiously ever since, and despite being pummeled by Israeli sieges, incursions and most recently a bombardment waged from land, sea and air, Hamas

succeeded in forming and preserving the first Islamist government on the Mediterranean. Initially, God squads scoured the beaches, searching for female skin. Vigilantes interrupted lovers and hauled them into court. "When a man and a woman are together, their first thoughts are of fornication, so we have to take care," explains a guard outside rows of beach chalets where, he claims, Hamas's corrupt secular predecessors—Yasir Arafat's security guards—had swapped wives by locking them in their chalets, dropping the keys in a bucket and playing lucky dip.

And yet once ensconced, the Islamists slowly relaxed. Despite the frowns of the religious affairs minister, Gaza clothes shops fill their windows with scarlet dresses and heart-shaped cushions to celebrate Valentine's Day, or as Palestinians call it, the Love Fest. Gazans call Hamas women "two jays" because they wear jeans beneath their *jilbabs*. Long bereft of cinemas and bars, Gaza at night bubbles with the honks of wedding parties touring the streets; the beaches where a few Gaza girls once dared to wear bikinis are now lined with resorts that celebrate mass weddings. Most curious of all, I discovered that what claims to be the Mediterranean's largest polygamous dating agency is government-subsidized—it sports a photograph on its walls of Gaza's Islamist prime minister, Ismail Haniya, handing over a \$100,000 check. The agency's owner, Fahmi al-Atiri, cites Hamas's stocky interior minister, who was reputed to have found at least one of his six wives through the agency (to keep within Islam's statutory limits, he divorced two). Having put me in a sufficiently sympathetic frame of mind, al-Atiri gives me a guided tour of his "marriage-facilitation charity," proudly plying me with albums of the women on offer. He suggests I assuage my wife's doubts by letting her choose the second, in the name of equal opportunity. It had worked for him, he says, noting with relief that his wife had selected a pretty divorcée 12 years his junior. Islamism and puritanism, I was beginning to learn, are far from one and the same.



THOMPSON

(continued from page 101)

been in the capital, covering the Senate Watergate hearings or the House Judiciary Committee debate on Nixon's impeachment, than stoned on the beach in Mexico with a bunch of freaks?

THOMPSON: Well—it depends on the timing. On Wednesday, I might want to go to Washington; on Thursday, I might want to go to Zihuatanejo.

PLAYBOY: Today must be Thursday, because already this morning you've had two bloody marys, three beers and about four spoons of some white substance, and you've been up for only an hour. You don't deny that you're heavily into drugs, do you?

THOMPSON: No, why should I deny it? I like drugs. Somebody gave me this white powder last night. I suspect it's cocaine, but there's only one way to find out—look at this shit! It's already crystallized in this goddamn humidity. I can't even cut it up with the scissors in my Swiss army knife.

Actually, coke is a worthless drug anyway. It has no edge. Dollar for dollar, it's probably the most inefficient drug on the market. It's not worth the effort or the risk or the money—at least not to me. It's a social drug; it's more important to offer it than it is to use it. But the world is full of cocamaniacs these days and they have a tendency to pass the stuff around, and this morning I'm a little tired and I have this stuff, so....

PLAYBOY: What do you like best?

THOMPSON: Probably mescaline and mushrooms: That's a genuine high. It's not just an up—you know, like speed, which is really just a motor high. When you get into psychedelics like mescaline and mushrooms, it's a very clear kind of high, an interior high. But really, when you're dealing with psychedelics, there's only one king drug, when you get down to it, and that's acid. About twice a year you should blow your fucking tubes out with a tremendous hit of really good acid. Take 72 hours and just go completely amok, break it all down.

PLAYBOY: When did you take your first acid trip?

THOMPSON: It was while I was working on the Hells Angels book. Ken Kesey wanted to meet some of the Angels, so I introduced him and he invited them all down to his place in La Honda. It was a horrible, momentous meeting, and I thought I'd better be there to see what happened when all this incredible chemistry came together. And sure as shit, the Angels rolled in—about 40 or 50 bikes—and Kesey and the other people were offering them acid. And I thought, Great creeping Jesus, what's going to happen now?

PLAYBOY: Had the Angels ever been into acid before that?

THOMPSON: No. That was the most frightening thing about it. Here were all these vicious bikers full of wine and bennies, and Kesey's people immediately started giving them LSD. They didn't know what kind of violent crowd they were dealing with. I was sure it was going to be a terrible blood, rape and pillage scene, that the Angels would tear the place apart. And I stood there

thinking, Jesus, I'm responsible for this; I'm the one who did it. I watched those lunatics gobbling the acid and I thought, Shit, if it's gonna get this heavy I want to be as fucked-up as possible. So I went to one of Kesey's friends, and I said, "Let me have some of that shit. We're heading into a very serious night. Perhaps even ugly." So I took what he said was about 800 micrograms, which almost blew my head off at the time...but in a very fine way. It was nice. Surprised me, really. I'd heard all these stories when I lived in Big Sur a couple of years before from this psychiatrist who'd taken the stuff and wound up running naked through the streets of Palo Alto, screaming that he wanted to be punished for his crimes. He didn't know what his crimes were, and nobody else did either, so they took him away and he spent a long time in a loony bin somewhere, and I thought, That's not what I need. Because if a guy who seems level-headed like that is going to flip out and tear off his clothes and beg the citizens to punish him, what the hell might I do?

PLAYBOY: You didn't beg to be scourged and whipped?

THOMPSON: No...and I didn't scourge anybody else either, and when I was finished, I thought, Jesus, you're not so crazy after all; you're not a basically violent or vicious person like they said. Before that, I had this dark fear that if I lost control, all these horrible psychic worms and rats would come out. But I went to the bottom of the well and found out there's nothing down there I have to worry about, no secret ugly things waiting for a chance to erupt.

PLAYBOY: You drink a little too, don't you?

THOMPSON: Yeah...obviously, but I drink this stuff like I smoke cigarettes; I don't even notice it. You know—a bird flies, a fish swims, I drink. But you notice I very rarely sit down and say, "Now I'm going to get wasted." I never eat a tremendous amount of any one thing. I rarely get drunk, and I use drugs pretty much the same way.

PLAYBOY: Do you like marijuana?

THOMPSON: Not much. It doesn't mix well with alcohol. I don't like to get stoned and stupid.

PLAYBOY: What would you estimate you spend on drugs in a year?

THOMPSON: Oh, Jesus....

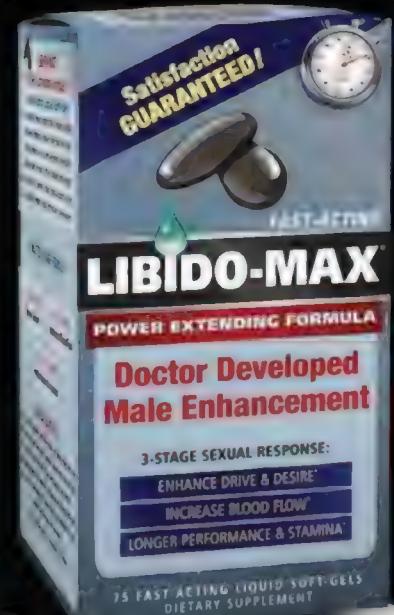
PLAYBOY: What the average American family spends on an automobile, say?

THOMPSON: Yeah, at least that much. I don't know what the total is; I don't even want to know. It's frightening, but I'll tell you that on a story I just did, one of the sections took me 17 days of research and \$1,400 worth of cocaine. And that's just what I spent. On one section of one story.

PLAYBOY: What do you think the drugs are doing to your body?

THOMPSON: Well, I just had a physical, the first one in my life. People got worried about my health, so I went to a very serious doctor and told him I wanted every fucking test known to man: EEG, heart, everything. And he asked me questions for three hours to start with, and I thought, What the hell, tell the truth; that's why you're here. So I told him exactly what I'd been doing for the past 10 years. He couldn't believe it.

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He said, "Jesus, Hunter, you're a goddamn mess"—that's an exact quote. Then he ran all the tests and found I was in perfect health. He called it a "genetic miracle."

PLAYBOY: What about your mind?

THOMPSON: I think it's pretty healthy. I think I'm looser than I was before I started to take drugs. I'm more comfortable with myself. Does it look like it's fucked me up? I'm sitting here on a beautiful beach in Mexico; I've written three books; I've got a fine 100-acre fortress in Colorado. On that evidence, I'd have to advise the use of drugs.... But of course I wouldn't, never in hell—or at least not all drugs for all people. There are some people who should never be allowed to take acid, for instance. You can spot them after about 10 minutes: people with all kinds of bad psychic baggage, stuff they haven't cleaned out yet, weird hostilities, repressed shit—the same kind of people who turn into mean drunks.

PLAYBOY: What kind of flak do you get for being so honest about the drugs you use?

THOMPSON: I'm not too careful about what I say. But I'm careful in other ways. I never sell any drugs, for instance; I never get involved in the traffic or the marketing end of the drug business. I make a point of not even knowing about it. I'm very sensitive about maintaining my deniability, you know—like Nixon. I never deal. Simple use is one thing—like booze in the 1920s—but selling is something else: They come after you for that. I wouldn't sell drugs to my mother, for any reason...no, the only person I'd sell drugs to would be Richard Nixon. I'd sell him whatever the fucker wanted...but he'd pay heavy for it and damn well remember the day he tried it.

PLAYBOY: Are you the only journalist in America who's ridden with both Richard Nixon and the Hells Angels?

THOMPSON: I must be. Who else would claim a thing like that? Hell, who else would admit it?

PLAYBOY: Which was more frightening?

THOMPSON: The Angels. Nobody can throw a gut-level, king-hell scare into you like a Hells Angel with a pair of pliers hanging from his belt that he uses to pull out people's teeth in midnight diners. Some of them wear the teeth on their belts too.

PLAYBOY: How did you first meet the Angels?

THOMPSON: I just went out there and said, "Look, you guys don't know me. I don't know you. I heard some bad things about you; are they true?" I was wearing a fucking madras coat and wingtips, that kind of thing, but I think they sensed I was a little strange—if only because I was the first writer who'd ever come out to see them and talk to them on their own turf. Until then, all the Hells Angels stories had come from the cops. They seemed a little stunned at the idea that some straight-looking writer for a New York literary magazine would actually track them down to some obscure transmission shop in the industrial slums of south San Francisco. They were a bit off balance at first, but after about 50 or 60 beers, we found a common ground, as it were....

PLAYBOY: It seems pretty clear you had something in common with the Angels. Did they ever ask you to join?

THOMPSON: Some of them did, but there was a very fine line I had to maintain there. Like when I went on runs with them, I didn't go dressed as an Angel. I'd wear Levi's and boots but always a little different from theirs; a tan leather jacket instead of a black one, little things like that. I told them right away I was a writer, I was doing a book and that was it. If I'd joined, I wouldn't have been able to write about them honestly, because they have this "brothers" thing....

PLAYBOY: In one of the last chapters of the book, you described the scene where the Angels finally stomped you, but you described it rather quickly. How did it happen?

THOMPSON: Pretty quickly...I'd been away from their action for about six months. I'd finished most of the writing, and the publisher sent me a copy of the proposed book cover and I said, "This sucks. It's the worst fucking cover I've seen on any book"—so I told them I'd shoot another cover if they'd just pay the expenses. So I called Sonny Barger, who was the head Angel, and said, "I want to go on the Labor Day run with you guys; I've finished the book, but now I want to shoot a book cover." I got some bad vibes over the phone from him. I knew

them when you're stoned and drunk. And fourth, when they start beating on each other, leave. I'd followed those rules for a year. But they started to pound on each other and I was just standing there talking to somebody and I said my bike was faster than his, which it was—another bad mistake—and all of a sudden, I got it right in the face, a terrific whack; I didn't even see where it came from, had no idea. When I grabbed the guy, he was small enough so that I could turn him around, pin his arms and just hold him. And I turned to the guy I'd been talking to and said something like, "Jesus Christ, look at this nut; he just hit me in the fucking face. Get him away from here," and the guy I was holding began to scream in this high wild voice because I had him helpless, and instead of telling him to calm down, the other guy cracked me in the side of the head—and then I knew I was in trouble. That's the Angels' motto: One on all, all on one.

PLAYBOY: How badly were you hurt?

THOMPSON: They did a pretty good job on my face. I went to the police station and they said, "Get the fuck out of here—you're bleeding in the bathroom."

PLAYBOY: Who are the Hells Angels, what kind of people?

THOMPSON: They're rejects, losers—but losers who turned mean and vengeful instead of just giving up, and there are more Hells Angels than anybody can count. But most of them don't wear any colors. They're people who got moved out—you know, musical chairs—and they lost. Some people just lie down when they lose; these fuckers come back and tear up the whole game. I was a Hells Angel in my head for a long time. I was a failed writer for 10 years and I was always in fights. I'd do things like go into a bar with a 50-pound sack of lime, turn the whole place white and then just take on anyone who came at me. I always got stomped, never won a fight. But I'm not into that anymore. I lost a lot of my physical aggressiveness when I started to sell what I wrote. I didn't need that trip anymore.

PLAYBOY: Some people would say you didn't lose all your aggressiveness, that you come on like journalism's own Hells Angel.

THOMPSON: Well, I don't see myself as particularly aggressive or dangerous. I tend to act weird now and then, which makes people nervous if they don't know me—but I think that's sort of a stylistic hangover from the old days...and I suppose I get a private smile or two out of making people's eyes bulge once in a while.

PLAYBOY: Your journalistic style has been attacked by some critics—most notably, the *Columbia Journalism Review*—as partly commentary, partly fantasy and partly the ravings of someone too long into drugs.

THOMPSON: Well, fuck the *Columbia Journalism Review*. They don't pay my rent. That kind of senile gibberish reminds me of all those people back in the early 1960s who were saying, "This guy Dylan is giving Tin Pan Alley a bad name—hell, he's no musician. He can't even carry a tune." Actually, it's kind of a compliment when people like that devote so much energy to attacking you.

PLAYBOY: What is gonzo journalism?

THOMPSON: It's something that grew out of a story on the Kentucky Derby for *Scanlan's* magazine. It was one of those horrible deadline scrambles, and I ran out of time. I was desperate. I was convinced I was finished, I'd blown my mind, couldn't work. So finally I just started jerking pages out of my notebook and numbering them and sending them to the printer. I was sure it was the last article I was ever going to do for anybody. Then when it came out, there were massive numbers of letters, phone calls, congratulations, people calling it a "great breakthrough in journalism." And I thought, Holy shit, if I can write like this and get away with it, why should I keep trying to write like *The New York Times*? It was like falling down an elevator shaft and landing in a pool full of mermaids.

PLAYBOY: Are fantasies and wild tangents a necessary part of your writing?

THOMPSON: Absolutely. Just let your mind wander, let it go where it wants to.

PLAYBOY: Doesn't that stuff get in the way of your serious political reporting?

THOMPSON: Probably—but it also keeps me sane.

PLAYBOY: You were the first journalist on the campaign to see that George McGovern was going to win the nomination. What tipped you off?

THOMPSON: It was the energy; I could feel it. If you were close enough to the machinery in McGovern's campaign, you could almost see the energy level rising from one week to the next. It was like watching pro football teams toward the end of a season. Some of them are coming apart and others are picking up steam; their timing is getting sharper, their third-down plays are working. They're just starting to peak.

PLAYBOY: The football analogy was pretty popular in Washington, wasn't it?

THOMPSON: Yes, because Nixon was into football very seriously.

PLAYBOY: You talked football with Nixon once, didn't you, in the backseat of his limousine?

THOMPSON: Yeah, that was in 1968. It never occurred to me that he would ever be president.

PLAYBOY: You couldn't have been too popular with the Nixon party.

THOMPSON: I didn't care what they thought of me. I put weird things in the pressroom at night, strange cryptic threatening notes that they would find in the morning. I had wastebaskets full of cold beer in my room in the Manchester Holiday Inn.

PLAYBOY: Why did Nixon let you ride alone with him?

THOMPSON: We were at this American Legion hall somewhere pretty close to Boston. Nixon had just finished a speech there and we were about an hour and a half from Manchester, where he had his Learjet waiting, and Ray Price [Nixon's chief speechwriter] suddenly came up to me and said, "You've been wanting to talk to the boss? Okay, come on." And I said, "What? What?" By this time I'd given up; I knew he was leaving for Key Biscayne that night and I was wild-eyed drunk. On the way to the car, Price said, "The boss wants to relax and talk football; you're the only

person here who claims to be an expert on that subject, so you're it. But if you mention *anything* else—out. You'll be hitchhiking back to Manchester. No talk about Vietnam, campus riots—nothing political; the boss wants to talk football, period."

PLAYBOY: Were there awkward moments?

THOMPSON: No, he seemed very relaxed. I've never seen him like that before or since. We had a good, loose talk. That was the only time in 20 years of listening to the treacherous bastard that I knew he wasn't lying.

PLAYBOY: Did you feel any sympathy as you watched Nixon go down, finally?

THOMPSON: Sympathy? No. You have to remember that for my entire adult life, Richard Nixon has been the national boogeyman. I can't remember a time when he wasn't around—always evil, always ugly, 15 or 20 years of fucking people around. The whole Watergate chancre was a monument to everything he stood for: This was a cheap thug, a congenital liar...what the Angels used to call a gunsel, a punk who can't even pull off a liquor-store robbery without shooting somebody or getting shot, or busted.

PLAYBOY: Do you have any projects on the fire other than the political stuff?

THOMPSON: Well, I think I may devote more time to my ministry, for one thing.

PLAYBOY: You're not a real minister, are you?

THOMPSON: What? Of course I am. I'm an ordained doctor of divinity in the Church of the New Truth. I have a scroll with a big gold seal on it hanging on my wall at home. In recent months we've had more converts than we can handle.

PLAYBOY: What's coming up as far as your writing goes?

THOMPSON: My only project now is a novel called *Guts Ball*, which is almost finished on tape but not written yet.

PLAYBOY: When you actually sit down to start writing, can you use drugs like mushrooms or other psychedelics?

THOMPSON: No. It's impossible to write with anything like that in my head. Wild Turkey and tobacco are the only drugs I use regularly when I write. But I tend to work at night, so when the wheels slow down, I occasionally indulge in a little speed—which I deplore and do not advocate—but you know, when the car runs out of gas, you have to use something. The only drug I really count on is adrenaline. I'm basically an adrenaline junkie. I'm addicted to the rush of the stuff in my own blood, and of all the drugs I've ever used I think it's the most powerful. [coughing] Mother of God, here I go. [more coughing] Creeping Jesus, this is it...choked to death by a fucking...poisoned Marlboro....

PLAYBOY: Do you ever wonder how you have survived this long?

THOMPSON: Yes. Nobody expected me to get much past 20. Least of all me. I just assume, Well, I got through today, but tomorrow might be different. This is a very weird and twisted world; you can't afford to get careless; don't fuck around. You want to keep your affairs in order at all times.

KIMMEL

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question to Molly? This was last August while you were on an African safari—and you had the ring ready.

KIMMEL: I had the ring. I enlisted her sister to help me because I have no idea. I'd bought my first engagement ring at Costco for \$500, which at the time was more than two months' salary for sure. But yes, I planned this out. We had many discussions about where we were headed, and I felt comfortable enough to propose—not that she knew when it happened. We were on one of those rich people's safaris; it wasn't like we were camped out in the bush. My kids were on the trip with us, and I'd talked to them first; they seemed in favor of it. So on the last night of the trip, I proposed to her in our hotel room. By then I'd been carrying this ring, jammed in my backpack, for like a week and a half, through the Olympics in London and through Africa. I was nervously checking the whole time to make sure it was still there, never trusting the hotel safes. What's funny is the diamond probably came from Africa, then somehow made it to Beverly Hills and then back to Africa—and then back here again.

PLAYBOY: Africa seems to spiritually alter the lives of whoever visits. Had you ever been?

KIMMEL: Oh no. I turn into Woody Allen in those situations. I took a triple dose of malaria pills and got every shot I could get before we went there. I'm terrified of animals. So it really was great. We were riding around in an open jeep beside animals running wild, and you could reach out and lose your arm if you wanted to. Everybody says they have this transformational experience in Africa. It did not change my life. The closest that came to happening for me was picking up a copy of Oprah's magazine in the airport.

PLAYBOY: Speaking of which, you shocked your faithful constituents by suddenly becoming an impassioned disciple of Oprah after she appeared on your Oscar night special last year. Were you in fact transformed?

KIMMEL: I shocked myself. I've done more jokes about Oprah than about any other celebrity, so the idea that she's now a sun that I worship is crazy. Completely unbeknownst to her, I started off on a bad foot with Oprah. My ex-wife loved her and would regularly use against me whatever Oprah had said on her show that day. I almost got to the point of delusional paranoia, like, Why is Oprah fucking with me? I was secretly worried the whole day we taped our comedy bits together that at some point she was going to pull me into a corner, put a knife to my throat and say, "Listen, motherfucker, I know the shit you said about me. I'll cut you from ear to ear!" But I learned that even Oprah is bigger than Oprah and that I was merely a pecking little bird on the back of a magnificent steed. At the end of the day she gave a speech to my staff, telling them how



great they were, and then had cases of champagne brought in. She just makes people feel good—and that's the secret, if there is one. It was then that I fully understood the power of Oprah. Also, I had a rash and she touched me and it instantly went away.

PLAYBOY: Have you and Sarah come out on the other side of your breakup—after almost seven years together—in a friendly zone?

KIMMEL: Definitely. I've said we're now like brothers. There just needed to be a period of complete separation and silence for a while. Then you kind of move on with your lives and things are going well for both of you and it's not as painful to communicate anymore. We have a real history, and some people think the way to go is to pretend it never happened or to erase it or run from it. But Sarah and I were good friends and still are. It doesn't go away just because we broke up. We didn't break up in an ugly way. It was definitely no fun, but it was relatively civilized.

PLAYBOY: How do you two connect these days? In her otherwise candid 2010 memoir, *The Bedwetter*, you're barely mentioned.

KIMMEL: She wrote that book right when the wounds were still fresh. It would've been uncomfortable—for both of us—

if she'd written about the relationship. Plus she knows I'm uncomfortable sharing the details of my personal life, even with the person with whom I'm involved. Nowadays we mostly e-mail. We don't talk that much, but we've intersected at some events. I took a good picture of Sarah and Molly together at a party last year, in fact. They like each other. The picture, of course, was for Cousin Sal.

PLAYBOY: You talk twice a week to a therapist—via iChat from your home—which boldly defies the old-school bugaboo about comedians avoiding psychiatry because they fear it will make them less funny.

KIMMEL: Woody Allen disproved that theory a long time ago. Some comics romanticize misery. Some of them seem to believe that happy equals shallow and anguish is an indicator of depth. It isn't. They're unrelated. What is more important to comedy than self-examination?

PLAYBOY: So tell us what self-examination has taught you about yourself.

KIMMEL: I've learned that anxiety affects almost every decision I make. I've learned about boundaries, though I still have trouble enforcing them. I have a hard time saying no to people. I've learned that most arguments have little

to do with what you're arguing about—that what people want most is to know they're being heard. Through most of my life my goal was to "win" an argument. I was missing the point. That realization has been a great help to me. And I will fight to the death any man who dares say it hasn't.

PLAYBOY: You're now pitted against the big boys at 11:35 P.M. in that never-ending fight known as the Late-Night War. What would winning there feel like?

KIMMEL: I am stupidly competitive, especially when it comes to baseball or Scrabble. I play even the most casual game of softball like Pete Rose would play game seven of the World Series. I slide headfirst, I run out every ground ball, and yet I don't feel late night is such a big competition. I mean we're now at the point where a lot more people watch our show online than on television. People can cherry-pick the best stuff you do, which is why you don't get 10 million people watching like Johnny Carson did. I remember when I was a kid, if Letterman had a guest I wanted to see, there was only one way to see it—stay up and watch. You don't have that anymore. The genie's out of the bottle. There won't be another king of late night to match Carson's dominance. There will be maybe a bunch of dukes and the occasional earl. I should add here that Dave transcends any time slot; he is the father of comedy as we now know it. I wonder if he knows what he means to every comedian under 50 years old. That NBC *Late Night With David Letterman* show was a revelation.

PLAYBOY: You were 14 when that show debuted. You have admitted you were obsessed: *Late Night*—themed birthday parties, the L8 NITE license plate on your first car.

KIMMEL: Some kids drew the Van Halen logo on their notebooks; I drew Dave's face on mine. I was authentically inspired by him, maybe to the deepest fanatical extreme. But it was sincere idolizing. I understood even then that he was changing everything with that mix of quiet sarcasm and by just standing further back from the absurdities of life than anyone on television ever had, in order to show us things as they really are.

PLAYBOY: Few people know that during the very first broadcast of *JKL*, you secretly wore the official T-shirt from Dave's old *Late Night* show.

KIMMEL: That's true. Our then head writer, Steve O'Donnell, who had also been Dave's original *Late Night* head writer, gifted me with it the day of our first broadcast, and I decided to wear it under my shirt. It was meaningful.

PLAYBOY: What does Jay Leno mean to you?

KIMMEL: I had loved him from his early appearances on the Letterman show. Some friends once bumped into him at the airport and, for my 21st birthday, had him sign a pizza box for me. He drew his little face on it. Strangely I don't even like talking about him anymore. The only time I think about him is when I'm asked. I believe he's not just a smart



“...thus, the increased blood flow to the penis triggers the increased cash flow from the wallet.”

politician but also a smart guy. I haven't met anyone who knows more than he does about how ratings and the business of late-night television work. Last fall, when Dave finally came on my show—which was clearly the greatest thrill of my career—somebody suggested, "Well, maybe you guys should talk about Leno." But for me that night was about my fondness for David Letterman, and Jay Leno had nothing to do with it. I didn't want him soiling our time together. When I've gone on Dave's show, I think it's been more relevant to make fun of Leno.

PLAYBOY: You excelled at it, especially back in 2010 when he abruptly repossessed *The Tonight Show* from Conan O'Brien after his nightly prime-time *Jay Leno Show* had failed.

You even imitated him, with the help of prosthetics, for a full installment of your own show. No mercy there at all?

KIMMEL: I don't know. I always feel bad if I hurt anybody's feelings, but I don't believe Jay Leno has actual feelings, and he doesn't seem to be that worried about other people's feelings. Anyway, I can do a pretty good Leno imitation. It was a lot of fun to be him—also much easier, particularly in constructing "his" monologue for that night. I have a filter mechanism in my head every night when I put together the monologue for our show: If I can imagine Jay Leno telling a joke, then I won't do it, even if it's a good joke. There are three ways he does a joke, every single time, always

with the same rhythm. The difference between Leno's jokes and Letterman's jokes is like the difference between *Celebrity Jeopardy!* and regular *Jeopardy!* During *Celebrity Jeopardy!* anyone could get all the answers; there's an accessibility that makes you feel like you're smart. I think Leno's jokes are similar in that way. Real *Jeopardy!* requires an attempt at greater mind function.

PLAYBOY: Admirably, you never broke character as Leno—though toward the end of that show you said, "Man, I'm getting tired of this." Your memorable moment came later that week when Leno had you appear via satellite on his prime-time show's 10 @ 10 quiz game.

KIMMEL: That was thrilling—it really was—and also kind of dangerous, be-

cause I realized he wanted to communicate to America that it was all just a friendly joke. That was the perception Leno clearly wanted out there. The more I thought about it the madder it made me. I didn't want him to just get away scot-free with what was happening all over again. Keep in mind this was the second time he'd done this. The first time, he'd elbowed Dave out of the *Tonight Show* gig, and now he'd done it to Conan. I felt there had to be some kind of comeuppance—not that I knew I'd do what I did. I assumed their plan was for us to at least playfully have it out on-air. Of course, other than a brief mention of my imitation, not even one of the 10 questions he asked was related

though. I don't know that he took any pleasure out of that time in his life. I doubt he ever happily reminisces about it.

PLAYBOY: Letterman appeared on your show last fall, during a week of *JKL* broadcasts from Brooklyn. Naturally, he squirmed throughout your professions of love, but he also said, "I think you're gonna be perfect at 11:35 P.M. I couldn't be happier to have you in the running."

KIMMEL: Some people interpreted that as a passing of the torch, whereas I'm pretty sure it was more like the passing of a Bic lighter—very generously, nonetheless. I know Dave is more uncomfortable with praise than any person who's ever lived. I decided it would mean more to viewers if I showed those teenage pictures

of my *Late Night* birthday cake and license plate to prove that I wasn't just kissing his ass and that these are not things I made up. Ultimately I chose to make him a little bit uncomfortable and hope that he could deal with that. By now he definitely knows it's authentic, and he must appreciate it or else why would he do the show? Not because he's a fan of mine. Let's be honest—he's doing it to be nice. But I sensed, toward the end, he started to warm up to my compliments. After we finished he said to me, "Let's start over and do it again."

PLAYBOY: The fact that you were selected to pay tribute to him onstage at last December's Kennedy Center Honors ceremony suggests he holds you in no small re-

gard. Plus he had to enjoy your reference to that medal hanging around his neck: "There's a 40 percent chance he'll hang himself with it."

KIMMEL: He was very gracious at the dinner after the show. He thanked me and asked me to "please stop doing this." But the highlight of the night came earlier, on the red carpet, where reporters from various entertainment news programs ask you why you're there and what Dave means to you. As Dave passed behind me, he gave me a hard, one-handed shove into a row of budding Mario Lopezes. Or is it Mario Lopez? I'm not sure. What I do know is that Dave shoved me.



to the controversy—as if none of it had ever happened. So I decided to jokingly bring every answer back to the Conan situation. I have to say I was surprised by Jay, because he just clung to that card full of innocuous questions no matter how I jabbed him. The smartest thing he could have done after the first two questions would be to say, "All right, that was 2 @ 10 with Jimmy Kimmel—we'll be right back!" That he didn't return fire, I still don't understand at all. It was almost as though he leaned into the punches.

PLAYBOY: Did you ever speak with Conan during that period?

KIMMEL: No, but we've met at a couple of parties since. He was very, very funny and nice. We really didn't talk about it,



REDNECK

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created another *Lawrence of Arabia*, but what really got the suits sweating at Universal Pictures, the studio newly cash-rich from nervy, small-risk movies like *American Graffiti* and *Jaws*, was the opening-night view from the rear of the theater: aisles of posh velvet seats, mostly empty.

At Radio City Music Hall, where hit movies might be held over for months, *Smokey and the Bandit* got the boot after one short week.

From the vantage point of more than 30 years, Needham—who had been Hollywood's highest-paid stuntman, working in signature films directed by Roman Polanski (*Chinatown*) and Mel Brooks (*Blazing Saddles*) and as an action double for John Wayne, James Stewart, Kirk Douglas, Steve McQueen and Burt Reynolds—says, "I'd warned Universal about opening the movie at the Music Hall: 'We won't make enough money to pay the damn Rockettes.'" The studio should have listened. Needham not only knew his audience, he also never forgot where he came from. The charismatic Memphis-born sharecropper's son, ex-logger, Korean War paratrooper, billboard cigarette model and sometime actor had cemented his hairy-chested gonzo rep by leaping off a runaway stagecoach and jumping from horse to horse for *Little Big Man*, driving a car off a dock and landing on a moving ferry 80 feet away for *White Lightning* and scoring a world record by jumping a boat 138 feet over a swamp for *Gator*.

Famed also for his four-letter vocabulary and for having lived with his buddy Burt Reynolds for well over a decade, Needham was summoned by the Universal brass to a post-Music Hall postmortem. Recalls Needham, "They started saying stuff like 'Should we cut the movie? Is it too this, too that?' It got drastic. It got heated. I said, 'Wait a minute, folks. I didn't make *Smokey* for big-city audiences. I made it for the South, the Midwest and Northwest. *Those* are my people.'"

As a sop to Needham's people, the same people who composed Reynolds's fan base, Universal booked the flick in a handful of Southern theaters and drive-ins. Needham, Reynolds, country music favorite Reed, Reynolds's friend and protégé Alfie Wise and other celebrities rode tractor-trailers through downtown Atlanta for a down-home-style second "premiere." Says Reynolds, "If you want to know if something's going to be a hit, ask a kid. There were lines of kids around the block. It looked like a riot was going on." Universal played up the movie's huge success in Southern states and reopened it in New York, the rest of the East and the Midwest. Says Needham, "Everywhere it played, it went bananas. All the bad reviews I got, the ones saying Burt walked through the movie and Jackie Gleason was a buffoon? Didn't matter. People told each other how funny the movie was, and word of mouth spread. I finally had to think, Maybe it is a movie for everybody."

By late June the flick had hauled in an impressive \$12 million. By year's end,

only *Star Wars* topped it as 1977's biggest moneymaker. Today, *Smokey and the Bandit* is estimated to have grossed in the neighborhood of \$365 million worldwide.

In hindsight, the signposts for the movie's big breakthrough look as big and broad as a barn door. Four months before the film stormed theaters, newly sworn-in president Jimmy Carter and first lady Rosalynn had begun to bring a touch of the New South to the Beltway. The CB-radio craze had millions zooming the highways, swapping tips on ways to outfox cops enforcing the 55-mile-per-hour speed limit imposed in 1974. C.W. McCall's 1975 ditty "Convoy"—about a cross-country trucker rebellion—held the number one position on the country charts for six weeks. Truckers were celebrated as modern-day cowboys. Country artists had plucked and twanged their way into the mainstream thanks to million-selling hits from Waylon Jennings, Dolly Parton, George Jones and Willie Nelson, among others. Movies came down with a case of country fever too, with such low-budget, high-octane material as *Macon County Line*, *The Great Texas Dynamite Chase* and *Eat My Dust* flexing blue-collar muscle at the box office. But *Smokey and the Bandit* put an openhearted, irreverent, multiracial face on the emerging South. As actor-director Billy Bob Thornton put it, "To the rest of the country, *Smokey and the Bandit* was just a movie. Here in Arkansas, it was a documentary."

Fittingly, the movie's origins were of the "just plain folks" variety. Needham, at the age of 45 in 1976, was becoming tired after two decades of stunting. On location he was fascinated that a maid kept raiding his hotel minibar for bottles of Coors. "It shocked me that it was illegal at the time to sell Coors east of the Mississippi River," he remembers. "When I heard that, my mind went crazy. Everything in *Smokey* came from the simple idea of cases of Coors everyone east of the Mississippi wanted to get their hands on. I liked that it wasn't about killing or hurting people, but it was action and about doing something illegal. I thought, What if someone were driving a truck full of beer and there were lots of fast cars and a lot of cops chasing him? My idea was to make it funny for anybody who has ever driven fast, gotten a ticket and driven away saying, 'Goddamn cops.'"

Needham figured his best shot at getting to direct the movie himself was to pitch it as a quick and dirty Roger Corman-style project costing \$1 million or less. He tapped his wild-man friend Jerry Reed to star as an ace driver and ladies' man nicknamed the Bandit. Reed, then 39, a ferocious guitar player, session musician and songwriter for Elvis Presley and Dean Martin, was also known for warbling toe-tapping hits such as "When You're Hot, You're Hot." Invited to appear in movies in 1975 by his friend Burt Reynolds, Reed expanded his audience via Reynolds vehicles, playing a musician in 1975's *W.W. and the Dixie Dancekings* and a vicious crime boss in 1976's *Gator*.

Needham scrawled the entire *Smokey*

script in longhand and slipped it to Reynolds, the former college halfback and smoldering Brando look-alike who, starting in the late 1950s, spent more than a decade doing stunt work and acting on TV Westerns and detective series before taking his friend Clint Eastwood's advice to head to Italy, where Reynolds was cast in the 1966 spaghetti Western *Navajo Joe*. Reynolds and Needham had become friends in 1959 when Needham stunted for the actor on the period adventure TV series *Riverboat*. Recalls Reynolds, "I told Hal I'd do his movie, but I also said, 'This is the worst script I've ever read in my fucking life'—and he was so cheap that he still only had it in his own handwriting on a legal pad. I told him to hire a typist and some writers to make it better. Hal couldn't have gotten his movie made without me, unless he did it on a \$50 budget."

Needham moved Reed to the sidekick role and got screenwriter pal James Lee Barrett (*Shenandoah*) to tinker with the script. Needham says, "I had a pretty good reputation for doing action and second-unit direction. The script had comedy and action, and having Burt Reynolds in my ass pocket, I thought, This is going to be a slam dunk." Despite having an increasingly bankable movie star onboard, Needham was thrown out of some of the best studio offices in town. But if Hollywood executives balked at Needham directing the movie, Reynolds says, "You only had to be around Hal to get it. He was ready, a guy who came up fast in TV and stunts and, more than that, a guy who could be in charge. He was like the first Marlboro Man, and he had the balls of fucking King Kong."

With his options dwindling, Needham grabbed the attention of producer Mort Engelberg, who had easy access to hit-making movie executive Ray Stark (*The Way We Were*, *The Sunshine Boys*). Engelberg helped set up the show at Universal with a lowball budget of \$5.3 million, \$1 million of which went to Reynolds. Universal president Ned Tanen was, according to Engelberg, the only Hollywood honcho willing to roll the dice, as he had done earlier with the offbeat low-budget, high-profit movies *American Graffiti* and *Car Wash*. Says Needham, "They didn't have to tell me that they were making the movie because of Burt. They figured if it was going to go in the toilet, with Burt as the star at least they had a pretty good chance of getting their money back."

According to Sean Daniel, then a rising young film executive who later became Universal's president of production, a few studio bosses might have sensed the zeitgeist and seen *Smokey and the Bandit* as a lighter country cousin of angry, anti-establishment, era-defining material such as *Dog Day Afternoon* and *Five Easy Pieces*. "There was this great wave of antiauthoritarian movies in the 1970s, movies that mostly came out of New York and Los Angeles and were part of the new direction in American cinema," Daniel says. "*Smokey and the Bandit* had its own version of rebellious, antiauthoritarian characters. It came



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from a different place, but it tapped into a similar American mind-set and spoke most directly to an audience waiting for movies made for them."

To punch up the screenplay, Universal hired writers including Robert L. Levy (who later produced *Wedding Crashers*), Charles Shyer (who later wrote and produced *Private Benjamin*) and Alan Mandel (who later wrote for *Who's the Boss?*). Needham recalls, "I told them, 'Don't change the title, the names of the characters or the action. Just jazz up the jokes.' They came back to my office about a week later, and I was so angry when I saw that the title was changed and Burt's character had a new name that I yanked a toothpick out of my mouth, threw the script in the wastebasket, picked up the tooth cap that I'd pulled out along with the toothpick and told them, 'You're fired.'"

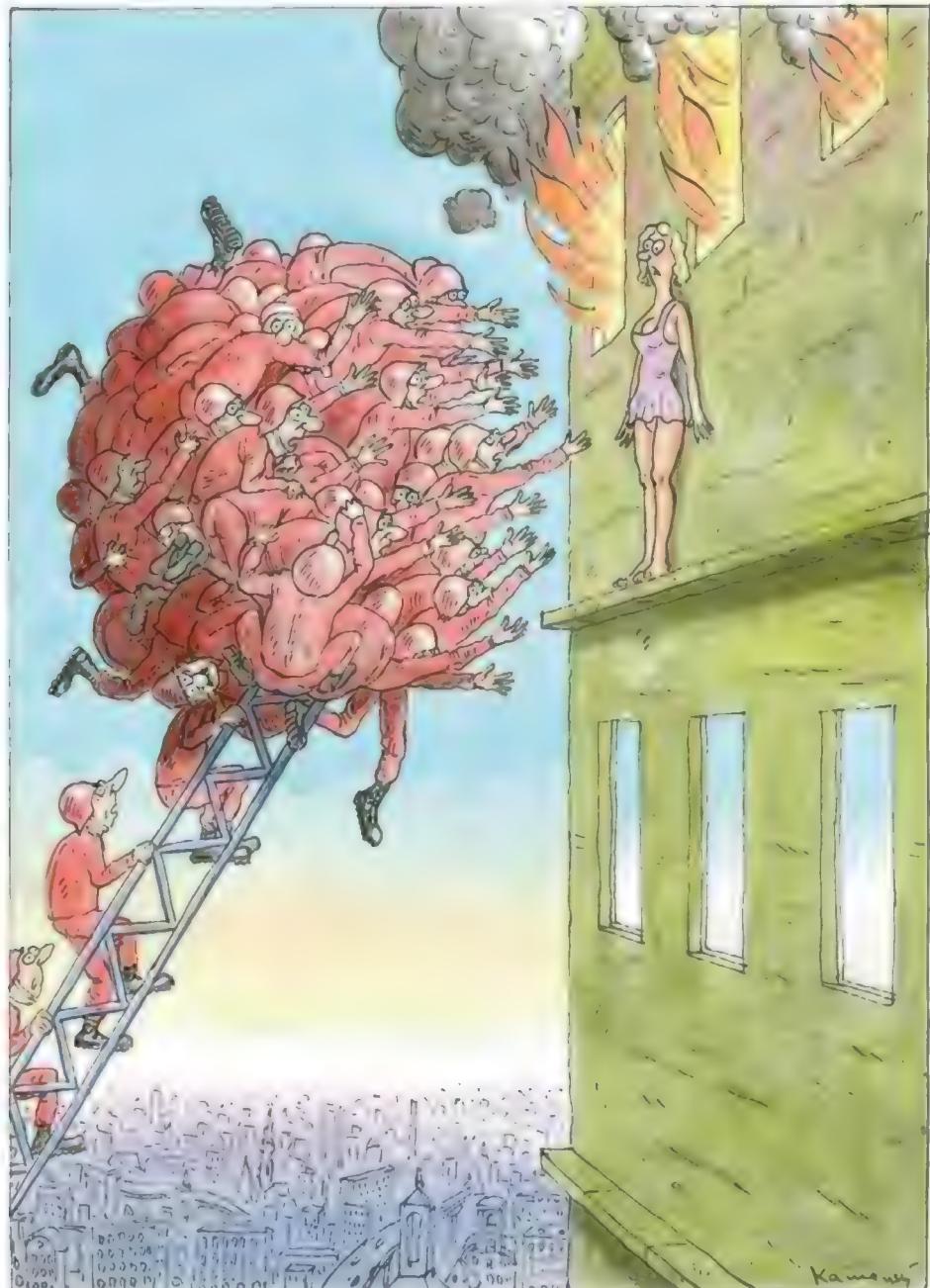
With the script in limbo, Reynolds took the lead in pursuing Sally Field to costar as a bride who flees her wedding to

the handsome but doltish son of a small-town sheriff. Field had been struggling to shuck her perky, sexless image as star of TV sitcoms *Gidget* and *The Flying Nun*, finally startling audiences with an Emmy-winning performance as a woman combatting multiple personality disorder in *Sybil*. Says Reynolds, "Universal asked, 'Why do you want the goddamn Flying Nun or Sybil?' They wanted someone who would have been all wrong for the picture. I told the studio, 'You guys don't get what sexy is. Sexy is *talent*. Sally is sexy.' Anytime I had any problems with the studio assholes, I'd go to [MCA/Universal chairman] Lew Wasserman, the smartest, most brilliant man, so I never had to bother with those numb-nuts. For Sally, I went to Lew, and he just fixed it."

Reynolds had reason to second-guess the project himself. "All, and I mean all, my advisors and friends went down on their knees, begging me in tears not to

make *Smokey*," he recalls. "Later, those same people said things like 'Boy, I'm glad I kept after you to do that picture.'" Whether or not those same advisors and friends also convinced him to turn down *M*A*S*H*, *Star Wars* and *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*, among other films, Reynolds remained loyal to Needham. He also continued to exercise his smarts and star muscle when it came to casting the role of Sheriff Buford T. Justice, the racist, explosive, good-old-boy cop who chases the Bandit. "I told Hal that the character should be dangerous, totally unpredictable, insane and, most of all, funny," says Reynolds. "I basically told them that if the great Jackie Gleason didn't play Buford, I wasn't doing the movie. My father was chief of police in Jupiter, Florida; he knew a cop named Buford T. Justice and also said *sumbitch* all the time. The studio assholes wanted Richard Boone, an actor I loved but not for this role. Of course, Lew Wasserman loved the idea of Jackie Gleason, and his marketing brain kicked into gear immediately, saying, 'I see 8 million Jackie Gleason sheriff dolls.'"

Gleason, the burly, acid-tongued comedian-musician dubbed the Great One by Orson Welles, had been hugely popular on TV in the 1950s with *The Jackie Gleason Show* and *The Honeymooners*, followed by less successful 1960s movie roles. Happily, Gleason's Oscar-nominated turn in *The Hustler* helped the public forget his critical and box-office duds *Gigot* and *Papa's Delicate Condition*. By the mid-1970s, Gleason had lived large, gambled, womanized and boozed; his health and fortunes needed a boost. Needham went into courtship mode. Says Needham, "I called Gleason and he asked, 'What makes you think I would do this?' I said, 'Well, Mr. Gleason, I am a big fan, and I've seen every *Honeymooners* and many other shows and movies you made. I wrote this script and I'm going to direct it, so nothing's etched in stone. If you play this character, I can see that you would be very, very funny.' The shorthand version of it is that he said, 'I'll do the movie.'"



To find someone to play Big Enos Burdette, the puffed-up millionaire who wagers \$80,000 that the Bandit can't run the bootleg beer across state lines in 28 hours, Reynolds helped Needham by pursuing mountain-size Pat McCormick. A top comedy writer for Don Rickles, Red Skelton and Phyllis Diller, McCormick spent 12 years crafting some of Johnny Carson's best *Tonight Show* monologues. His rep as a gonzo wit was matched by his renown as a carousing eccentric. Songwriter, composer, actor and frequent *Tonight Show* guest Paul Williams (McCormick's junior by only 13 years but cast as his frustrated, vertically challenged offspring, Little Enos) recalls, "My first conscious memory of this strange, funny man is the two of us coming into the blinding light out of a bar across from NBC in Burbank after we'd been there all night drinking. I'm five-foot-two and he's six-foot-seven. He looked down at me and said, 'Jesus, you look like an aerial photograph of

a human being.' Burt thought we'd be funny together, so we did *Smokey and the Bandit*, *Smokey and the Bandit II* and even worse."

Needham himself made one of the single shrewdest casting decisions of the entire movie when he chose as the Bandit's car a 1977 black Pontiac Firebird Trans Am Special Edition sporting the "screaming chicken" eagle decal. "When I saw a picture of it in a magazine, I said, 'That's the car I want to put the Bandit in,'" Needham says. "I called Pontiac, where nobody had heard of me, of course, and said, 'I'd like some Trans Ams for Burt and three LeMans for the sheriff's car.' There was some back-and-forth, and they gave me four Trans Ams and two LeMans. After the movie came out, though, you had to be on a waiting list for six months to even get a Trans Am." Devised as Pontiac's answer to Ford's 1964 breakaway hit Mustang, the Trans Am saw sales jump by 20,000 units after the movie made the pony car a regular guy's equivalent to 007's Aston Martin.

Cast and crew corralled, the movie kicked off filming during the summer of 1976 in West Palm Beach, Florida; Ojai, California; and Georgia locations including Jonesboro, Cumming, McDonough, Redan and Atlanta. Two days before production began, a Universal hatchet man descended on Atlanta to shave Needham's budget by \$1 million, reducing it to \$3.3 million after Reynolds's salary. Reynolds, the movie's million-dollar man, proved he was all too human. Says Alfie Wise, memorably cast in the movie as a state trooper, "Burt would be riding high and then have deep fatigue. A medical checkup found that his blood sugar was too low; he had hypoglycemia." Explains Needham, "It meant he might be able to work three, four hours at most. Well, so much for Burt covering my ass and protecting me from Universal. I had to rearrange the entire shooting schedule and on a reduced budget, but it showed them that I could handle things."

Collaborators on *Smokey and the Bandit* and subsequent Needham-Reynolds movies describe the on-set vibe as "fun and games," "summer camp" and "testosterone city." Reynolds credits Needham with setting the tone: "Hal would break every day at five o'clock. The guys would be in the

bars drinking by 5:20. Everybody would be shit-faced by 11 p.m. There was this local bar where Gleason would perform and Jerry Reed would sing about 500 country songs. We had so much fun every single night. By five a.m. the next day, everybody would be ready to go again, in good shape."

Well, more or less. Recalls Reynolds, "Gleason had this assistant named Mal who had been working for him for decades. Gleason would yell, 'Mal? Hamburger!' and Mal would rush over with a glass of vodka and a sandwich. Gleason would start eating 'hamburgers' around nine a.m." Production manager Peter Burrell, who would go on to work on *Smokey and the Bandit II*, says, "Any scene requiring Jackie to stand upright we usually found was better to shoot in the morning." Paul Williams,

person, and I thought, Uh-oh, but I went over and he invited me in wearing exactly what you'd expect he would—slacks and a sports jacket with a red carnation in the lapel. He fixed drinks; we toasted to a good shoot, got completely plowed and never once talked about the damned script. The next day I found him on the set sitting in his chair wearing his clothes from the night before, except that his shoes were on the wrong feet. He raised his cup in salute, leaned back in his tall chair, lost his balance and rolled all the way down a 12-foot incline." Says Reynolds, "We all ran toward him and I said, 'Jackie, are you all right?' He got right back up and said, 'Never spilled a drop.'"

Although Gleason's comic gifts had his co-workers in hysterics, his work methods challenged the film editors. Says Reynolds, "He was so wonderfully inventive, he never did the same thing twice when the camera was on him."

Recalls Needham, "Seventy-five percent of Jackie Gleason's dialogue Gleason wrote himself, like calling Mike Henry [the former *Tarzan* actor who plays his doofus son] 'tick turd' and telling him, 'There's no way, *no way*, that you came from my loins. Soon as I get home, first thing I'm gonna do is punch your mama in the mouth.' I mean, who could improve on that?"

According to Needham and fellow crew members, the high-spirited Jerry Reed was a blast of white lightning. During the first week's shooting, Reed asked Needham to have a listen as he tore into

who gained his sobriety in 1991, says, "Every day Gleason would have this predictable arc where he'd go from being a little quiet around 10 a.m. to a little funnier, then to even funnier, to being in a great mood, and then you'd have the beginnings of his going to a dark place." Adds Burrell, "He was a brilliant comedian, and when you had him from 'even funnier' to 'in a great mood,' he had so many ad-libs, we had to bite our lips to keep from ruining takes."

Early on, Gleason had made it clear to newbie director Needham what he was in for. "The Sunday night before we were to begin our first day of shooting, Jackie called and asked if I'd go over to his hotel to talk about the script," Needham says. "At this point, we hadn't actually met in

Although his five-year reign as the country's number one box-office attraction began a year after the filming of *Smokey*, Reynolds's good looks and laid-back charm—not to mention his 1972 nude 133

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centerfold in *Cosmopolitan*—had already made him a much-written-about sex god reputed to have enjoyed the charms of actresses Mamie Van Doren, Inger Stevens and Catherine Deneuve, among others. Wise, who frequently worked and traveled with Reynolds, recalls routinely scouring the star's hotel suites in advance of his arrival, sometimes finding amorous female fans hidden in closets and under beds. Says Paul Williams, "Why do you think we all hung so close around Burt? You could get raped just by standing close to him. If your clothing was just a little bit loose, you could experience an accidental fondling. Burt has always attracted a rather extensive crowd of attractive, free-spirited ladies." But few failed to notice the attraction between Reynolds and his appealing co-star Field. "The audience actually saw Burt and Sally falling in love on screen," Needham says. "That added so much to the fun of the movie and spoke volumes for their characters' relationship in the movie too. They were complete professionals about it."

Smokey collaborators say the bond between Reynolds and Needham, also a magnet for women, was tight. Says Wise, "In a closed town like Hollywood, Burt opened a lot of doors for Hal. They're like brothers." The relationship caused much chatter and head-scratching around gossipy Hollywood. Reynolds explains, "Hal knew everything about cowboyin', horses and action, and I was a Broadway actor who had been at the Actors Studio and gone through all kinds of bullshit for looking too much like Marlon Brando when I was trying so hard not to. I knew that I could do comedy, and that's why I did so much comedy guesting on *The Tonight Show*. By the time of *Smokey*, I was ready. Hal encouraged that." Longtime friend Marilu Henner, Reynolds's co-

star in 1983's *The Man Who Loved Women* and 1984's *Cannonball Run II*, says that Reynolds and Needham "spoke the same language and had that hard-drinkin', hard-lovin', real-guy mentality." Jamie Farr, who co-starred in Needham and Reynolds's two *Cannonball Run* movies, remembers, "Hal looked out for Burt. They worked in tandem. Burt would make suggestions, and Hal always listened."

But the director needed no advice when it came to staging blowout chases, fender benders and vehicle crushers. Working with a trusted crew on a tight budget, *Smokey* alumni recall one of Needham's big stunts nearly spinning out of control during a scene in which Field's character hurtles the Trans Am over a fence and crashes onto an athletic field, sending child and adult extras scrambling every which way. "Just talking about this out loud scares the shit out of me," says Reynolds. "Everybody was convinced that the stunt double for Sally had done major stunts before because she was living with well-known stuntman Bobby Bass. She hadn't. The car jumped the fence fine, but she jammed her foot on the accelerator. Bobby Bass was in the car with her and only had to deck her with one punch, but he couldn't pry her fingers off the wheel or pry her foot off the accelerator. In the movie, you see children looking terrified in front of the car coming right toward them. Some of the women in the stands fainted, and Sally, Hal and I went over to them to make sure everybody was all right. The kids, of course, were laughing, saying that they wanted to do it again. But it was insane to do that."

Needham says, "It wasn't that the scene was ill planned or anything, but we didn't take into consideration that the field would be so slick. I had a camera in the car, and

I thought we had killed a kid for sure. My heart was pumping so hard. It was so dangerous, but it looked so good I said, 'Shit, I've got to have the extra shot.' We built the back of a dugout out of boards and things and had the car just come crashing right through it. That scene killed that particular Trans Am."

Another Trans Am wrecker was the police car chase that ends with the Bandit's muscle car jumping a rotted-out bridge. Needham explains, "The approach to the bridge was short, so I had replaced the stock engine with one of my NASCAR 800-horsepower race car engines. We pretty much shot the other car by bouncing on curbs, racing through ditches and going down embankments. To finish the movie with our last car, we had to use parts from the other cars that wouldn't run anymore. For the last scene in the movie, the only car we had left wouldn't start, so we had to have another car push it into the shot. Considering the wear, tear and abuse we put those cars through, I'm surprised they lasted as long as they did."

Two years after *Smokey and the Bandit* completed its initial theatrical release, it nailed down the number 12 position on *Variety*'s list of the biggest movie moneymakers of all time. Needham (whose first *Smokey* percentage check reportedly came to \$400,000, about \$1.5 million in today's currency) became overnight a go-to action director. Reynolds rocketed to America's number one box-office attraction in 1978 and stayed there through 1982. Field's best actress Oscar for 1979's *Norma Rae* vaulted her into a whole new stratosphere. The Pontiac Firebird Trans Am became the American ride, NASCAR edged out Formula One as the country's favorite form of racing, and countless tail-chasing movies and TV shows such as *The Dukes of Hazzard* were spawned.

Needham, Reynolds and Field stuck together for 1978's middling financial success *Hooper*, a semiautobiographical action flick about an aging stuntman attempting one last stunt in a rocket car, before succumbing in 1980 to pressure for more *Smokey*. Needham was more gung ho about the prospect than Reynolds, who wanted to team with his friend and director in something grander. Says Reynolds, "I wanted to star in a remake of the 1930s movie *Captain Blood*, something where I could swing from ropes doing that Errol Flynn pirate shit. I wanted to show that I had chops. They wanted another *Smokey*."

With the sequel's budget upped to \$10 million and Reynolds's take now at \$3 million, Reynolds again helped Needham fill out the cast of the project—variously called *Smokey and the Bandit Have a Baby*, *Smokey and the Bandit Ride Again* and *Smokey and the Bandit 10-4*—this time with close friend Dom DeLuise, who had made a splash in *Blazing Saddles*. The Pittsburgh Steelers' Terry Bradshaw and Charles Edward Greene (a.k.a. football star "Mean Joe" Greene) also joined the cast. This time around Pontiac filled Needham's order for 10 black Trans Ams, 25 red Bonnevilles



"You'd best go. His show's nearly finished and he'll notice you."

and 25 white Bonnevilles. With the tabloids hotly reporting the ups and downs of the Reynolds-Field relationship, rumors emerged that Reynolds was considering replacing Field with Julie Kavner, best known today for voicing Marge Simpson. In the end, Field did the film.

On its August 15, 1980 release, *Smokey and the Bandit II* scored what was then the second-highest box-office debut in movie history and eventually grossed more than \$66 million. But the charm, heart and peapickin' good-time funkiness of its predecessor were missing—especially considering how Reynolds's character had morphed into an arrogant, wasted, falling-down drunk whom Field's character actually accuses of being a “fame junkie” who feeds intravenously on *People* magazine and *National Enquirer* headlines. The sour barbs prompted a San Francisco movie reviewer to observe that the stars “seem to be airing private beefs.” Reynolds admits today, “We were fighting at the time. Sally would say something pretty strong to me and I’d say, ‘Write down all of that,’ and she wrote all that dialogue. We did that arguing scene in one take, and she really cried. I told Hal, ‘You’re going to print that version. I don’t think there’ll be a second one.’ She was fucking amazing. That’s what the movie needed more of.” Needham recalls Reynolds calling him into his trailer two days before the film wrapped to announce that he and Field were calling it quits.

The critics were so brutal (the *Philadelphia Evening Bulletin* called suicide “a pleasurable alternative”) that Needham flipped them off by taking out trade-paper ads featuring caustic reviews alongside a photo of him outside a bank with a wheelbarrow overflowing with cash—gangsta style before the term was coined. Recalling that ad today, Needham says with a hearty laugh, “Wasn’t that cute? So many producers and directors congratulated me for having the balls to say ‘Fuck the critics.’ Burt and I were going to do that ad together, but finally he said, ‘You know, Hal, you may not give a shit, but I’ve got a career I’ve got to watch.’”

When the studio suggested a third *Smokey*, Needham decided that he too had a career to watch. Both he and Reynolds flipped off Universal. Needham’s lack of enthusiasm could not have been helped by a \$3 million lawsuit filed in 1977 by Michael T. Montgomery charging him and others with plagiarizing both a 1975 treatment and full screenplay. The *Los Angeles Times* reported in July 1983 that a jury vote of 11 to one had called for a settlement. Explains Needham, “When I was looking for somebody to rewrite and build it up, some schmuck I met one time said it was all his idea. It cost the insurance company \$100,000 and he went away. I hope to hell he choked on the money.”

Reynolds and Needham hooked up again for the dismal NASCAR comedy *Stroker Ace*, a reject with audiences and critics. Meanwhile, Universal announced in the fall of 1982 that production was soon to begin on *Smokey Is the Bandit*, starring Jackie Gleason in dual roles and with TV director Dick Lowry at the helm. In an April

27, 1983 article, venerable *Variety* reporter Army Archerd wrote that sneak-preview audiences had been so baffled by Gleason’s playing both the sheriff and the Bandit that Universal hastily arranged reshoots with Jerry Reed playing the Bandit. But even with a brief cameo by Reynolds (who donated his fee to charity), fans smelled trouble, and the flick released as *Smokey and the Bandit Part 3* stalled after making only \$7 million.

Since the glory days of *Smokey and the Bandit*, it’s easy to see the cultural skid marks the movie left on car-crazy successors such as *The Fast and the Furious* and the self-conscious *Gone in Sixty Seconds* remake. In 2007’s *Death Proof*, Eli Roth croons “East Bound and Down,” and HBO paid homage with Danny McBride’s series of the same name. *Smokey and the Bandit* references mark everything from episodes of *Two and a Half Men* to the videos for Kid Rock’s “Cowboy” and Nelly’s “Ride Wit Me” to Jeffrey Dean Morgan’s performance in *Watchmen*. *Smokey* fans included movie suspense maestro Alfred Hitchcock (who considered Burt Reynolds for several film projects), as well as *My Name Is Earl* star Ja-

By late June Smokey and the Bandit had hauled in an impressive \$12 million. By year’s end, only Star Wars topped it as 1977’s biggest moneymaker.

son Lee, who says, “I saw it as a kid, and it was badass—the car, Burt’s clothes. Sally was hot, and it was full of action. We liked going on the ride with them. As an adult, *Smokey* reminds us how much better shit was when movies weren’t all cheesy, super tough guy, full of CGI and bad one-liners.”

For some true believers and diehards, the movie is—and has always been—about hot wheels. There’s Georgia-based Tyler Hambrick, for instance, whose 1979 Kenworth 900W truck and 40-foot trailer are painted to replicate the semi Reed drives in the film. Hambrick’s rig has helped raise funds for the Wounded Warrior Project, which helps veterans. Hambrick, who leads *Smokey* location tours, has also participated in every weeklong Bandit Run, an annual event in which *Smokey* buffs—many in restored Trans Ams and from as far away as Europe and Canada—cruise a predetermined route through the South, with pit stops at museums, automobile factories and local car shows. Says Bandit Run organizer and sponsor Dave Hall, a former computer-software designer whose Lincoln, Nebraska garage Restore a Muscle Car is a haven for owners willing to spend as much as \$100,000 to restore their

Smokey Trans Ams: “Mention a Trans Am and people know it as the *Smokey* car, so the demand for these cars is always there. Pull into a gas station in one of those cars and everyone wants to talk to you. You become someone you’re probably not when you’re driving your minivan.”

North Carolina resident Debbie Ciepiela, who publicizes the Bandit Run, laughingly says she must compete with her husband’s “motorized mistress”—a fully restored Bandit car he bought in 1976. Says Ciepiela, “*Smokey and the Bandit* is a fun, feel-good piece of Americana that I’ve probably seen at least 100 times. The Bandit Run attracts CEOs, college students, construction workers, mechanics and other unexpected types. When we drive through these small towns and people see our cars, they yell and cheer. You can’t help but get caught up in the excitement.” Comments Reynolds, who organizers hope will attend the 2013 Bandit Run, which this July will travel from Lincoln, Nebraska to Golden, Colorado, “I’ve had five big, tough, burly guys show me all across their backs these incredible tattoos of me as the Bandit. After I said ‘Wow’—what else can you say?—these big guys were actually blushing. It was so sweet.”

After *Smokey and the Bandit II*, Reynolds and Needham created yet another car-cult franchise when they reunited in 1981 and then 1984 for the free-for-alls *The Cannonball Run* and *Cannonball Run II*. About an illegal, secret cross-country race, the films feature some of the biggest stars of the day: Roger Moore, Farrah Fawcett, Telly Savalas and fabled Rat Packers Frank Sinatra, Dean Martin, Sammy Davis Jr. and Shirley MacLaine. Reynolds remembers throwing parties in his hotel every night while filming. The movies would later inspire everything from a short-lived 2001 reality-TV series to the Cannonball Rat Race, a six-day New York to California road race and treasure hunt with an \$8,995 entry fee that kicked off in New York on September 3, 2011. But *Cannonball Run II* star Marilu Henner says some experiences can’t be duplicated at any price: “Burt and Hal liked to have a good time and made sure the rest of us had one too. The real party was hanging out in the bar at the Arizona Inn in Tucson with idols like Frank Sinatra, Sammy Davis Jr., Dean Martin, Shirley MacLaine—and to have Sammy Davis Jr. suddenly break out in song? Secretly, I was pinching myself.”

The 1970s and 1980s are long gone, but fever for the revved-up Needham-Reynolds movies rages on. “I know the movies are always showing somewhere,” says Needham, “because we all get residual checks from the U.S., Finland, Australia, New Zealand.” The director, who in 2011 published his autobiography *Stuntman!* and tools around town these days in a Mini Cooper, looks back on it all, saying, “My movies weren’t artistic. I kept the jokes funny, I made the action fast, and I never killed anybody. Who knows? Maybe it’s time we did another truck movie.” Needham has an Oscar now. Maybe he’s right.



ENLIGHTENMENT

(continued from page 104)

for anyone seeking spiritual solace in an unfamiliar faith.

Until February 2012, McNally and Thorson were rising stars among a small community of Tibetan Buddhist meditators and yoga practitioners who had come to the desert to escape the scrutiny and chaos of the city in order to focus on spiritual development. McNally was a founding member of Diamond Mountain University and Retreat Center—a small campus of yurts, campers, temples and retreat cabins that sprawls over two rocky valleys adjacent to historic Fort Bowie in Arizona. In the past decade Diamond Mountain has risen from obscurity to become one of the best-known, if controversial, centers for Tibetan Buddhism in the United States. Its supreme spiritual leader is Michael Roach, an Arizona native, Princeton graduate and former diamond merchant who took up monk's robes in the 1980s and remains one of this country's most enthusiastic evangelists for Tibetan Buddhism. McNally was Roach's most devoted student, his lover, his spiritual consort and, eventually, someone he recognized as a living goddess.

For 14 months McNally led one of the most ambitious meditation retreats in the Western world. Starting in December 2010 she and 38 other retreat participants pledged to cut off all direct contact with the rest of the planet and meditate under vows of silence for three years, three months and three days. Unwilling to speak, they wrote down all their communications. Phone lines, air-conditioning and the internet were off-limits. The only way they could communicate with their families was through postal drops once every two weeks. The strict measures were intended to remove the distractions that infiltrate everyday life and allow the retreatants a measure of quiet to focus on the structure of their minds.

Thorson's death might have gone unnoticed by the world if, days after, Matthew Remski, a yoga instructor, internet activist and former member of the group, had not begun to raise questions about the retreat's safety on the well-known Buddhist blog Elephant Journal. He called for Roach to step down from Diamond Mountain's board of directors and for state psychologists to evaluate the remaining 30-odd retreatants. His posting received a deluge of responses from current and former members, some of whom alleged sexual misconduct by Roach and made accusations of black magic and mind control.

Roach rose to prominence in the late 1990s after the great but financially impoverished Tibetan monastery Sera Mey conferred on him a *geshe* degree, the highest academic qualification in Tibetan Buddhism. Conversant in Russian, Sanskrit and Tibetan, he was an ideal messenger to bring Buddhism to the West and was widely acclaimed for his ability to translate

complex philosophical ideas into plain English. He was the first American to receive the title, which ordinarily takes some 20 years of intensive study. In his case, he was urged by his teacher, the acclaimed monk Khen Rinpoche, to spend time outside the monastery, in the business world. At his teacher's command, Roach took a job at Andin International Diamond Corporation, buying and selling precious stones. According to a book Roach co-authored with McNally, *The Diamond Cutter: The Buddha on Managing Your Business and Your Life*, in 15 years he grew the firm from a small-time company to a giant global operation that generated annual revenue in excess of \$100 million.

The book cites a teaching called "The Diamond Sutra," in which the Buddha looks at diamonds, with their clarity and strength, as symbolic of the perfection of wisdom. But the diamond industry, particularly during the years Roach was active in it, is one of the dirtiest in the world—fueling wars in Africa and linked to millions of deaths. During a lecture Roach gave in Phoenix last June, I asked him how he could reconcile his Buddhist ethics with making vast sums of money through violent supply chains.

Roach stared at me with moist, sincere-looking eyes and avoided the question. "If your motivation is pure, then you can clean the environment you enter," he said. "I wanted to work with diamonds. It was a 15-year metaphor, not a desire to make money. I wanted to do good in the world, so I worked in one of the hardest and most unethical environments." It was the sort of answer that plays well with business clients. Rationalizations like this are not uncommon in industry, but they are for a Buddhist monk.

If Roach was unorthodox, he was also indispensable. His business acumen might have been enough for some early critics to look the other way. His share of Andin's profits was ample enough that he could funnel funds to Sera Mey to establish numerous charitable missions. His blend of Buddhism and business made him an instant success on the lecture circuit, and even today he is comfortable in boardrooms in Taipei, Geneva, Hamburg and Kiev, lecturing executives on how behaving ethically in business will both make you rich and speed you along the path of enlightenment.

•

Ian Thorson had always been attracted to alternative spirituality, and he had a magnetic personality that made it easy for him to win friends. Still, "he was seeking something, and there was an element of that asceticism that existed long before he took to any formal practice of meditation, yoga and whatnot," explains Mike Oristian, a friend of his from Stanford University. Oristian recounts in an e-mail the story of a trip Thorson took to Indonesia, where he hoped a sacred cow might lick his eyes and cure his poor eyesight. It didn't work, and Thorson later admitted to Oristian that "it was a long way to go only to have the feeling of sandpaper on his eyes."

Roach gave Thorson a structure to his passion and a systematic way to think about his spiritual quest. After Thorson began studying Roach's teachings in 1997, Oristian remembers, some of his spontaneous spark seemed to fade. Kay Thorson, Ian's mother, had a different perspective. She suspected he had fallen under the sway of a cult and hired two anti-cult counselors to stage an intervention. In June 2000 they lured him to a house in Long Island and tried to get him to leave the group. "He was skinny, almost anorexic," she says. They tried to show him he had options other than following Roach. For a time it seemed to work. Afterward he wrote to a friend about his family's attempt to deprogram him: "It's so weird that my mom thinks I'm in a cult and so does Dad and so does my sister. They talk to me in soft voices, like a mental patient, and tell me that the people aren't ill-intentioned, just misguided." For almost five years he traveled through Europe, working as a translator and tutor, but he never completely severed ties. Eventually he made his way back to Roach's fold.

In 1996, when she was only two years out of New York University, Christie McNally dropped any plans she'd had to pursue an independent career and became Roach's personal attendant, spending every day with him and organizing his increasingly busy travel schedule. And though his growing base of followers didn't know it, she would soon be sharing Roach's bed. The couple married in a secret ceremony in Little Compton, Rhode Island in 1998.

As had many charismatic teachers before him, Roach established a dedicated following. As it grew he planned an audacious feat that would take him out of the public eye and at the same time establish him in a lineage of high-Himalayan masters. He announced that, from 2000 to 2003, he would put his lecturing career on hold and attempt enlightenment by going on a three-year meditation retreat along with five chosen students, among them Christie McNally.

In many ways, Roach's silence was more powerful than his words. Three years, three months and three days went by, and Roach's reputation grew. Word of mouth about his feat helped expand the patronage of Diamond Mountain and the Asian Classics Institute, which distributed his teachings through audio recordings and online courses. Every six months he emerged to teach breathless crowds about his meditating experiences. At those events he was blindfolded but spoke eloquently on the nature of emptiness. Finally, on January 16, 2003 he dropped two bombshells in a poem he addressed to the Dalai Lama and published in an open letter.

In his first revelation he claimed that after intensive study of tantric practices he had seen emptiness directly and was on the path to becoming a bodhisattva, a sort of Tibetan angel. The word *tantra* derives from Sanskrit and indicates secret ritualized teachings that can be a shortcut to advanced spiritual powers. The second revelation was that while in seclusion he had discovered that his student Christie McNally was an incarnation of Vajrayogini,

the Tibetan diamond-like deity, and that he had taken her as his spiritual consort and wife. They had taken vows never to be more than 15 feet from each other for the rest of their lives and even to eat off the same plate. In light of her scant qualifications as a scholar, Roach legitimized McNally by bestowing her with the title of "lama," a designation for a teacher of Tibetan Buddhism.

These revelations severely split the Tibetan Buddhist community. The reprimands were swift and forceful. Several respected lamas demanded that he hand back his monk's robes. Others, including Lama Zopa Rinpoche, who heads the Foundation for the Preservation of the Mahayana Tradition, a large and wealthy group of Tibetan Buddhists, advised that he prove his claims by publicly showing the miraculous powers that are said to come with enlightenment—or be declared a heretic. That Zopa Rinpoche was one of Roach's greatest mentors made the criticism all the more pertinent and scathing.

Robert Thurman, a professor of religious studies at Columbia University, met with Roach and McNally shortly after Roach published his open letter. He was concerned that Roach had broken his vows and that his continuing as a monk could damage the reputation of the larger Tibetan Buddhist community. "I told him, 'You can't be a monk and have a girlfriend; you have clearly given up your vow,'" Thurman says. "To which he responded that he had never had genital contact with a human female. So I turned to her and asked if she was human or not. She said right away, 'He said it. I didn't.' There was a pregnant pause, and then she said, 'But can't he do whatever he wants, since he has directly realized emptiness?'" On the phone I can hear Thurman consider his words and sigh. "It seemed like they had already descended into psychosis."

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Intensive retreats where monks meditate in isolated caves are mainstays of Buddhism in Tibet, where they are typically used to establish the credentials of an important teacher. However, such retreats make less sense outside Tibet's historically feudal world. The human mind is reasonably fragile, and isolation can act like an echo chamber. For the retreatants, Diamond Mountain was a ritualized place where they could try to sharpen their minds to see as little of the ordinary world as possible and allow their visualizations to be the focus of their daily life. For better or worse, Roach and McNally emerged from their first great retreat as different people than when they began. Much of the explanation for this comes down to physical changes in the brain.

In its purest form meditation is a way to look at the mind in isolation. By calming the body and watching thoughts come and go, an experienced meditator can uncover astonishing things in his or her physiology and psychology. Meditation is a little like putting your mind in a laboratory and seeing what it does on its own. Although everyone's experience is different, it is

common to see walls shift, hear noises that aren't there, observe changes in the quality of light or have time inexplicably speed up or slow down. Neuroscientists have discovered that over the long term meditating can cause changes in the composition of brain matter, and even short stints can create significant physical alterations in one's neurological makeup.

Whatever changes occur during short, daily meditations are only amplified on silent retreats. Although comprehensive clinical studies on the potential adverse side effects of such retreats are just getting under way (one led by Willoughby Britton, a neuroscientist at Brown University, is in its second year), it is clear that some people find the isolation and mental introspection too intense. Some lose touch with reality or fall into psychotic states. The world generally embraces meditation as a method of self-help, but a 1984 study by Stanford University psychologist Leon Otis of 574 subjects involved in Transcendental Meditation (one of the more benign forms) showed that 70 percent of longtime meditators displayed signs of mental disorders.

Another explanation is that our expectations for meditation are often too grand. From a young age we in the United States are steeped in tales of superheroes and jedi who are able to perform great feats through their innate specialness and intensive study. We hear stories of levitating yogis and the power of chakras, tai chi and badass Shaolin monks, and quietly think to ourselves that maybe anything is possible. McNally's speedy elevation to Vajrayogini and lama mirrors those nascent desires. For those who aren't instantly anointed, the religion offers a clear method: Meditate often, keep your vows and, if you're in a hurry, start practicing tantra.

From a certain standpoint Roach's approach was a success. Members of the group noted that during the period when Roach and McNally were in a relationship, attendance at events and lectures was never higher. They taught together, and their mutual confidence and earnestness seemed to be an open door to enlightenment. If it was okay to take a spiritual partner along for the ride, couples could join and work on their spiritual practice together instead of following the more orthodox custom of practicing alone.

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After the 2003 retreat, Roach and McNally continued to forge a spiritual path that, to outside observers, looked less like Tibetan Buddhism and more like a new faith that mixed elements of Buddhism, Hinduism, Christianity and good old-fashioned showmanship. They co-authored half a dozen books on Tibetan meditation, yoga and business ethics, one of which attained best-seller status.

Sid Johnson, a musician who was briefly on the board of directors of Diamond Mountain, worried that the group was becoming too focused on magical thinking. His concerns came to a head in 2005 during a secret initiation into the practice of the bull-headed tantric deity Yamantaka,



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whose name translates as "destroyer of death." As part of a four-day ritual, all the initiates had to meet privately with Geshe Michael and Lama Christie, as their students called them, in a yurt for their final empowerment, which would help them conquer death. Johnson was nervous when he entered the room wearing a blindfold and heard Roach ask him to lie down on their bed. When he did so, McNally started to massage his chakras, starting with his head and ending at his penis. "I'm not sure who undid my pants, but it was part of the blessing," says Johnson. When they were done, he sat up—still wearing the blindfold—and felt McNally's lips pressing against his. They kissed. "There is a part of the initiation when your lama offers you a consort, and the way Geshe Michael teaches it, the things that happen in the metaphysical world also have to happen in the real one," says Johnson. Afterward, he says, they all giggled like children at a summer camp, as though they were breaking taboos and no one else would know. Ten minutes later Johnson left and they asked Johnson's wife to come in alone. Altogether, almost 20 students had private initiations with the couple that night.

By most accounts McNally began to take center stage in the spiritual road

show. It was as though Roach was stepping back and allowing his partner to teach philosophy and meditation in his stead. "He seemed distracted and unengaged whenever she would speak, just staring at the ceiling while she was talking, as if distancing himself from whatever Christie was saying," says Michael Brannan, another longtime student and current full-time volunteer at Diamond Mountain. "He called her Vajrayogini. Can you imagine being promoted to deity by your spouse and guru?"

Even though she was a lama, McNally wanted to prove she could be a leader on her own. She pressed for a second great retreat, this one even more ambitious than the first. Instead of only a few humble yurts on a desolate property, they would build dozens of highly efficient self-cooling solar-powered structures—permanent infrastructure on Diamond Mountain property that could host scores of retreatants for long periods. Roach and McNally planned to lead 38 people into the desert on a quest to see emptiness directly. They had no problem finding followers to foot the bill.

Participants were required to build and pay for their own cabins, with the expectation that when they were done with their retreat, ownership of the cabins would revert

to Diamond Mountain. Modestly priced cabins cost around \$100,000, while more lavish spaces hovered closer to \$300,000. Volunteers and contractors labored on the designs for several years while Roach and McNally prepped the spiritual seekers with philosophy and meditation techniques.

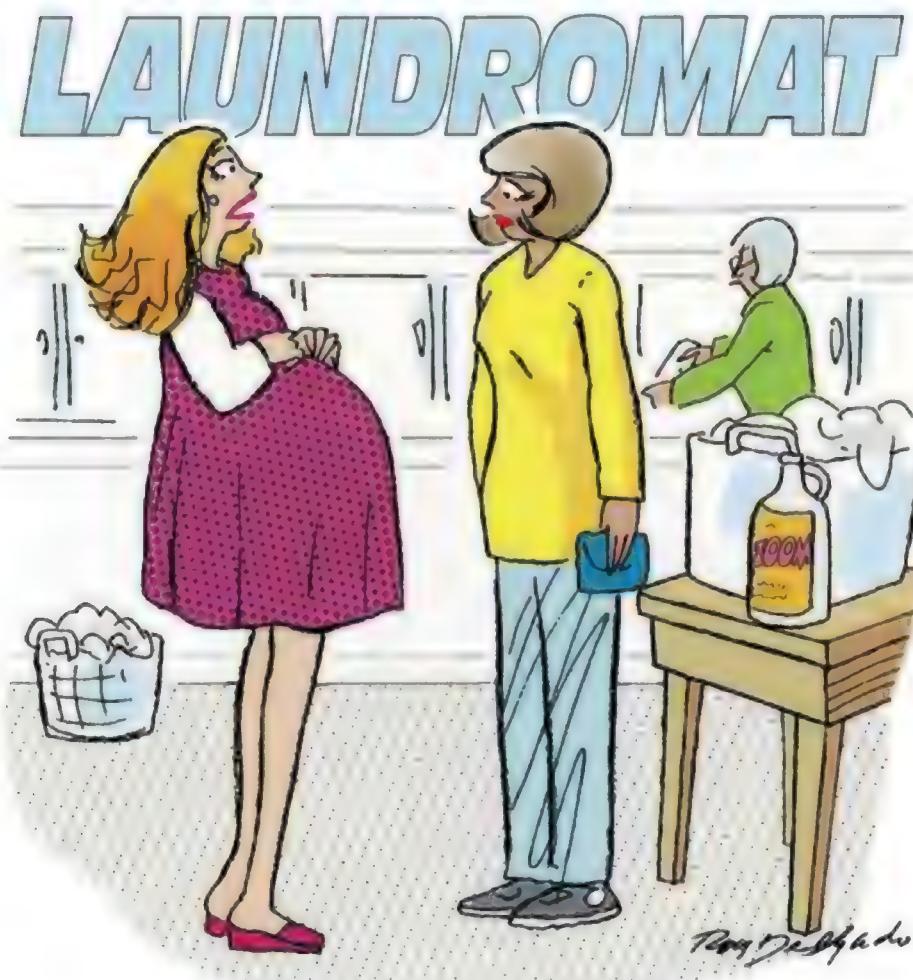
By the middle of 2010, plans for the second great retreat were coming together, but Roach and McNally's relationship was falling apart. The reasons for the split are unclear. Members of the group speak about illicit sexual liaisons between Roach and other students and covert theological power struggles. No one knows for sure, and neither Roach nor McNally commented on the split for this story, but the fallout reverberated through the community.

Michael Brannan remembers "a lot of people just sort of swapped partners," including McNally. Former member Ekan Thomason remembers that Thorson dropped off his then girlfriend at her house with a sleeping bag and disappeared into the desert. The next time Thomason saw Thorson, he and McNally were dancing under a disco ball at a party at the Diamond Mountain temple. In October 2010 McNally and Thorson married in a Christian ceremony in Montauk, New York. Faced with being confined on a silent retreat with his ex-wife, Roach quietly backed away from his commitment to participate and gave over leadership of the affair to McNally.

For McNally the second great desert retreat would be a major testing ground for her as a spiritual leader. At its conclusion she would have had almost seven years of silent meditation under her belt, a qualification few Buddhist practitioners—even in Tibet—can claim. With 38 people looking to her for spiritual guidance, including a new husband for whom she was guru, goddess and wife, she needed to impart something special. She found her answer outside Tibetan Buddhism, in the Hindu goddess Kali.

Kali isn't an ordinary member of the Hindu pantheon. Although a few major temples, including the famous Dakshinewar Kali Temple in Calcutta, are devoted to her worship, most mainstream Hindus invoke her name only in times of violence or war. In the 1700s British colonialists popularized and exaggerated stories of Kali worshippers called *thuggee* (from which we get the English word *thug*), who murdered unsuspecting travelers on isolated roads and used their bodies in sacrifices to the goddess to gain magical powers. The few Hindus steeped in tantric practice—usually quite different from Buddhist tantra—will sometimes appeal to Kali for female spiritual power, called *Shakti*. Although Kali is considered untamable, wild and dangerous, it seems McNally wanted to add the goddess to her tantric meditation in order to speed her journey to enlightenment.

In October 2009 McNally staged a 10-day Kali initiation with more than 100 prospective devotees. She decorated the



"I didn't catch his name. But then, we didn't talk much."

Dr. Steffanie Seaver PSY.D is an expert in the area of interpersonal relationships. She is a Researcher, Author and accomplished Public Speaker and has lectured nationwide for over a decade. Dr. Seaver has also been involved with several publications covering relationship and lifestyle issues.



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temple with weapons: swords, guns, crossbows, chain saws and menacing-looking garden implements meant to show the violent side of the deity. In a symbolic rite reminiscent of India's now-banned *thuggee* cult, members were "kidnapped" on the road between holy sites and stuffed into a small wooden box to heighten their fear. Roach held his own version of the ritual nearby as Ekan Thomason met Lama Christie in a structure called Lama Dome. There, McNally gave her a medical lancet.

"Kali requires something from you. She requires your blood," McNally said, reminding Thomason of a beautiful swashbuckling pirate as she ran a finger across the sharp edge of the knife.

The ceremony was designed to be terrifying, and participants were split in their reactions. Some had accepted McNally as an infallible teacher and hoped to learn despite the theatrics. Others worried that Diamond Mountain was turning toward a dark, occult version of Hinduism. But a year later almost 40 retreatants would lock themselves in a valley under Lama Christie's sole spiritual direction.

In the months leading up to the retreat in 2010 the group showed signs of stress as members became increasingly confused between the spiritual world they were trying to access through meditation and the real world, where actions had predictable consequences. Under Roach and McNally's direction they threw parties in the temple at which they served "nectar," specially blessed booze they could drink despite their vows of abstinence. At one of these parties some members, who wish to remain anonymous, say they saw Roach and McNally perform miracles—allegedly walking through a wall of the temple building by bending the laws of space and time. Such stories became commonplace around the camp, and the communal hysteria vaulted Roach and McNally to godlike status.

Joel Kramer and Diana Alstad, co-authors of *The Guru Papers: Masks of Authoritarian Power*, explain these perceived miracles on a psychological level. Kramer says, "People can convince themselves they have seen many things that are really just projections of their own mind." Alstad adds that disciples give their mental energy to a guru and the guru reflects the energy back to them. It seems likely that McNally learned to see the world through Roach's lens. "Roach took her mind over—or she gave it to him," says Alstad. "That's what followers do: They totally surrender. She surrendered to him as a young, unformed woman. And a similar process was probably reversed between Thorson and McNally. She was his lama, his guru and his wife."

When the retreat started, no one had much of an idea how their relationship would hold up. Then, in March 2011, after three months of silence, Thorson knocked on the door of a retreatant who was a nurse practitioner. He was bleeding profusely from three stab wounds. She was afraid to treat him and recommended he go to a hospital. But the second person to see him,

a doctor on retreat, reluctantly tended to the slashes on his torso and shoulder. The wounds were so deep, the doctor said, they "threatened vital organs."

At the time, McNally and Thorson gave no explanation for how it happened, but soon rumors of domestic abuse began to circulate in the same hushed whispers as the talk about Roach's supposed sexual liaisons with various students. With most people under vows of silence, it is no surprise that almost a year passed before the event became publicly known.

In February 2012, Lama Christie recused herself from her vow of silence to give a public lecture on her realizations during meditation. Wearing her trademark white robes and with a silken blindfold across her eyes, she sat on a throne and talked about the spiritual lessons she had learned while grappling with an increasingly unstable and violent relationship.

In an act she described as playful, McNally said she stabbed Thorson three times with a knife they had received as a wedding present. He could have died in the exchange, and few people in the crowd could grasp what the lesson was supposed to mean. Could violence be a route to their ultimate spiritual goals? Had their teacher gone crazy?

Referencing her newfound grasp of the goddess Kali, she asked the crowd to learn from her experience with violence. Although the original recording of her talk has been taken off the internet, she later explained the incident in a public letter: "I simply did not understand that the knife could actually cut someone.... I was actively trying to raise up this aggressive energy, a kind of fierce divine pride.... It was all divine play to me." She went on to write about the tantric lessons Kali had taught her through the event and how she was trying to cope with occasional violence in her relationship with Thorson.

Jigme Palmo, a nun who sits on Diamond Mountain's board of directors, stated later that the board was worried the focus on violence might spur other meditators down a dangerous path. The directors immediately convened emergency meetings and discussed various plans of action. "It was an impossible situation," says Palmo. "We didn't know what was happening inside the retreat, and yet the board was ultimately responsible if something went wrong." They consulted a lawyer and sent urgent written messages to McNally asking for more information about domestic violence and her increasingly erratic decisions.

Suddenly aware that her teachings had created a rift in the community, McNally tried to shore up her control of the meditators by banning all correspondence with the outside world. She ordered that all mail deliveries cease and instructed the retreatants to refuse contact with their families. The board members decided they had no choice but to act unilaterally to remove McNally from her role as teacher and to remove McNally and Thorson from the retreat itself.

The board sent them a letter explaining

their decision and gave McNally and Thorson an hour to pack their things and leave, offering to cover their relocation expenses, including hotel costs, a rental car, prepaid cell phones and \$3,600 cash. The message was clear: Get out now. But McNally and Thorson had taken vows to stay in Diamond Mountain's consecrated area, and they had a different plan. Instead of leaving, McNally and Thorson planned to find a nearby cave where they could continue to meditate and still have contact with some of McNally's students.

Before they made their final arrangements to leave, McNally met privately with Michael Brannan to discuss the board's decision. McNally kept her vow of silence, and the two passed notes back and forth, creating an effective transcript of her thoughts at the time. The document, which Brannan shared with me, sheds light on McNally's state of mind. In it she mentions ordinations that took place and the pressure that people—especially Thorson—felt while they were "locked up" on retreat.

But it all also fit into a broader plan. "Everything is perfect, you'll see" she begins, adding, "I have inherited my holy lama's [Roach's] style of pushing people past their breaking point." She blames her former husband for having "stoked the fire" and making people fear her as a teacher. Perhaps the real problem was her former lover's jealousy over her current husband.

She then disappeared without any further communication with the board of directors or most of the other retreatants. She, Thorson and two attendants hauled gear up a rugged mountainside. They found an ancient cave just out of sight of the retreat valley where they could finish their three years of silent meditation unobserved. The few people they let in on the secret promised to ferry them supplies as needed. Water would be placed at strategic points where one of them could retrieve it without being seen.

Objectively, the decision to live out the rest of the retreat on an Arizona mountainside was fatal from its inception. Sergeant David Noland, who coordinated the rescue effort, has seen 36 people die of dehydration or exposure to the elements in his county in the past three years. "At that point a death was inevitable," he says. The cabins at Diamond Mountain were built with the environment in mind, but the pockmark in the rock where McNally and Thorson laid their sleeping bags was exposed. For two months the couple was battered alternately by rain, wind and snow.

Though their decision proved to be fatal, McNally and Thorson weren't suicidal. They thought they were exceptional and the rules for ordinary humans didn't apply anymore. They were on the cusp of greatness. Enlightenment was within reach. Three days before Thorson died, McNally's supporters published a 31-page manifesto she had written, titled "A Shift in the Matrix," in which she explains their spiritual lessons over the past year. She writes: "One of the highest tantric vows there is is the vow of how you should see

your lama and how to behave toward them. When you are with a partner, your partner becomes your highest lama. So I have been [Ian's] lama for many years, but he recently became mine as well. Your lama is unquestionably a divine being and your job at all times is to fight any desire to see them in a lesser way. You should trust your lama with your life, and totally surrender to them."

To them their cave was a challenge they would overcome together, a sacred location in the tradition of the high-Himalayan lamas, whose asceticism and hardships were a path to greatness.

McNally and Thorson had been running low on water and began to drink brown, polluted runoff rainwater. On the morning of April 22, 2012, Thorson wouldn't wake up, and McNally activated the emergency distress beacon she had packed. Thorson was barely breathing. It would take another seven hours for the search-and-rescue team to bring them down off the mountainside. An autopsy would eventually attribute Thorson's death to dehydration. His corpse weighed only 100 pounds, but McNally did not want to be separated from it and fought the police and mortician with fists and tears when they tried to take it into custody.

McNally recuperated in a hospital in nearby Wilcox, Arizona. Several days later she vanished. Rumors have flown that she is on another silent retreat, meditating on the meaning of her husband's death. According to various accounts, she is in the Bahamas, South America, Colorado, Kathmandu or California, but no one really knows what she is doing or if she is safe.

I saw Roach one more time, during a one-day stopover in Phoenix on my way back to California. He had avoided my e-mails and requests the entire time I was in Arizona, and this was my only chance to have a private word with him. His lecture that night, on the importance of mindfulness, lasted three hours, and when he was done I got in line behind a 50-ish Indian woman carrying a Louis Vuitton handbag. She chatted with other people in the line and examined a beaded necklace she hoped Roach would bless. "I can't believe I'm going to meet the enlightened one," she said excitedly.

When it was my turn I stood in front of his throne and introduced myself. I tried to phrase a question about how he was dealing with Thorson's death. "It was a very sad event," he said, "but why are people not interested in my teaching? One person dies in the desert and suddenly everyone pays attention. People should be talking about all the good works that I've done instead."

It wasn't a satisfying answer. It was as if Roach couldn't take a minute to reflect on the profundity of what had happened. To him it may just have been karma ripening, and perhaps the story didn't end when someone died in the desert. It might have just begun.



HARDWICK

(continued from page 86)

sports. As a spectator or a participant?

HARDWICK: Neither. I don't think there's anything inherently wrong with sports; I just don't give a shit. When I see dudes in sports bars shoving chicken wings in their faces, watching a game and saying, "That's my team," it mystifies me. I'm like, You're sitting on your fat ass. What are you doing that makes you a contributing member of the organization? You've lifted nothing but drumsticks for the past three hours.

Q9

PLAYBOY: Have you considered joining a fantasy league? They have statistics and math, all the nerd staples.

HARDWICK: Yeah, that's not a bad idea. I would have to look at it like a chess game, as a strategy. If I did that, I could probably find a way in. It would make my life a lot easier if I could find a way to appreciate sports. I mean, I've never watched an entire football game. It's horrifying. So many dudes try to bond with me over sports. They'll come up to me and say, "Hey, do you know the score of the game?" I won't even know what to say. Game? What game? I can give you some quotes from the last Harry Potter movie. Does that help?

Q10

PLAYBOY: You majored in philosophy at UCLA. Were you just not interested in making money or having a career?

HARDWICK: Steve Martin, my comedy idol, was a philosophy major in college. He once said that philosophy is a great thing for comedians to study because it screws up your thinking just enough. If you're going into stand-up, you're hyper-analyzing the world and asking as many questions about a thing as you possibly can so you can figure out the ultimate nature of that thing. If you want to get into comedy, it's really the only subject worth studying.

Q11

PLAYBOY: Your first big career break was as a co-host with Jenny McCarthy on the MTV dating show *Singled Out*. Which leads to the obvious question—

HARDWICK: No, I did not fuck Jenny McCarthy.

Q12

PLAYBOY: Actually, that's not what we were going to ask, but thanks for clearing that up. We were wondering if hosting the show taught you any big life lessons about dating.

HARDWICK: For me, the lessons of *Singled Out* weren't about dating. They were about fame. I learned that just being on MTV doesn't make you famous. When I got the job, I was like, Oh man, I'm going to be on a private jet with fucking Kurt Cobain. We'll be toasting martinis and getting blown by mermaids. And of course none of that happened. The show ended, and I became an

out-of-work comic with a drinking problem.

Q13

PLAYBOY: Is it true that Jon Stewart mocked you into sobriety?

HARDWICK: In a way. I was in my apartment, watching *The Daily Show*, and McCarthy was a guest. Stewart made a joke about me. Somehow my name came up, and Stewart was like, "He gets our coffee now." It devastated me. It was the first moment I took a long hard look at my life and my career. It made me realize, Oh my God, I've become that MTV stereotype I always worried about becoming. I was proud of Jenny, and I say that with no bitterness. There are only a handful of people who started their careers on MTV who managed to keep it going. There's Jenny and Pauly Shore and maybe a few others. But it never happened for me. I became the washed-up drunk loser with floppy hair who used to be on a dating show.

Q14

PLAYBOY: How did you dig yourself out of that hole?

HARDWICK: When I look back, every time I felt something bleak was happening with my career, I would make some sort of survival-based choice, doing something I could control. I was very lazy about doing stand-up when I was hosting *Singled Out*. I was like, "Whatever, I have a job." But when I had nothing, it was a lifeline. It made me feel I was finally taking control of my career. The same thing with the podcast. Every time I was rejected by the entertainment business, which was a lot, I'd be like, "Well, fuck you. I'm going to do my own thing." Even if nothing happened with it, it was my thing and they couldn't touch it. Of course, the business didn't give a shit at the time, but I was still muttering under my breath like a crazy person.

Q15

PLAYBOY: You wrote a self-help book called

The Nerdist Way: How to Reach the Next Level (in Real Life). Are you better at giving advice or taking it?

HARDWICK: It's so much easier to give advice than to take it. But I tend to trust any advice that comes from years of fuck-up research. When I was younger, my parents used to say, "Trust us on this. We have more experience than you." And I was like, "Shut up, you don't know anything!" But I was an idiot. They did know more stuff because they'd experienced more things. They'd fucked up more often than I had. There's no better path to knowledge than fucking up.

Q16

PLAYBOY: You were part of a regular Dungeons & Dragons game with comedians Brian Posehn, Patton Oswalt and others. Why are comics drawn to fantasy role-playing games?

HARDWICK: I really don't know. Maybe because D&D is the perfect mental exercise. It's math and fantasy. It's statistics and *Lord of the Rings*. It requires you to use your mind but also be social. Our game was amazing just because everyone involved was so goddamn funny. Patton had a drunken dwarf character called Stump Hammer. I was a lawful good wizard named Blaividane, sort of an anagram of David Blaine's name. Brian had a ninja character who was obsessed with pickles. It was some of the best times I've ever had playing D&D. I really miss it.

Q17

PLAYBOY: You don't play anymore?

HARDWICK: The bummer thing about a D&D game is that it's like having a band. If one person can't show up, then the whole thing falls apart. Our game ended because our dungeon master got a girlfriend, and she didn't want him playing D&D on Sundays with a bunch of guys for five hours. We'd run into him later, and it was always

awkward. It was like we were a dude and he was our ex-girlfriend.

Q18

PLAYBOY: You're a regular at Comic-Con in San Diego. Are we correct in thinking it's like Plato's Retreat with Spock ears?

HARDWICK: There is an element of that, yeah. Hey, nerds made porn available on the internet—what else do you need to know? But that's the vibe at comic book conventions in general. When I was growing up, nerds had this reputation for being virgins who lived in their parents' basements. That's certainly not the case now. I would say that nerds, as a rule, are much more sexually active than the average person. There's a lot of anxiety and stress in the nerd brain, so sex is good for that.

Q19

PLAYBOY: You're a *Star Wars* fanatic. Isn't your girlfriend, Chloe Dykstra, part of *Star Wars* royalty?

HARDWICK: In a way, yeah. Her dad did the effects for *Star Wars*. He helped develop the technology for the lightsaber. The freaking lightsaber! I'm not saying that's why I go out with her, but it's definitely a big check in the "pro" box. A couple of months ago she brought me this gift bag, and she was like, "Yeah, I was just rifling around my dad's garage." It was an original *Star Wars* crew T-shirt, with a design I'd never seen before, and an original *Star Trek: The Motion Picture* crew shirt. It was the best gift I've ever gotten. I went on a tour of Skywalker Ranch a couple of years ago and saw the original everything—the original droids, the original concept art, the original lightsabers. I saw the original Yoda, and I'll be honest, I wanted to spoon with him.

Q20

PLAYBOY: As a card-carrying nerd, this is probably the most important question you'll ever be asked. If and when you have kids, how will you introduce them to the *Star Wars* movies? In what order?

HARDWICK: You're not kidding about it being an important question. I talk about this a lot. It's a big moral quandary. Do you want your kids to experience it like you experienced it, or do you go in the proper order? I've heard arguments on both sides. The problem with doing it in numerical order is that it ruins the Vader "You are my father" surprise. The most convincing case I've read was by this guy Rod Hilton, who came up with something called the Machete Order. He recommends showing them like this: *A New Hope*, then *Empire*, then *Attack of the Clones*, then *Revenge of the Sith*, then *Return of the Jedi*, completely leaving out *Phantom Menace*. His point is *Phantom* is unnecessary, and parts two and three play like a flashback. It makes sense, but I still don't know. I saw *Star Wars* in the theater with my dad, so if I had a kid, I'd maybe want to show the movies to him or her in that order, just for the tradition of it. [pauses] I don't know. This is too much pressure. It's like asking where I want to be buried. Can I get back to you?



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PARKA

(continued from page 79)

yourself to what fruit's on the ground."

"Excuse me?" The teacher quickly retreated and disappeared.

Alevtina giggled, but the landlady, undaunted by the teacher's clever escape, pressed her point loudly.

"Thirty-five, like I said, and nothing."

"What do you mean—nothing?"

"Well, you know, a waste of goods."

"What goods?" pretended Alevtina. In fact, from the moment the landlady mentioned A.A. she'd been poring over all those women she knew in Moscow who were withering from drudgery and loneliness, while right here was a healthy specimen with four limbs who didn't stammer

and was mentally stable (with some luck).

"You don't think he has a lady friend in Komarovka, eh?" Alevtina asked.

"How would I know?" croaked the landlady and stood up to go to bed early, because, she explained importantly, she was allergic to the sun and got up to pee at four. She relieved herself under the berry bushes, "for fertilizer," and shuffled inside.

Little stars sprinkled across the darkening sky. Alevtina sighed deeply in the direction of the porch. Nina, that's who he needs. Thirty-seven years old, a pharmacist, mother died recently, lives in a studio on the outskirts. The few admirers got shooed off by the old witch, who had been correct: Where would the newlyweds sleep, under Mama's bed? (Nina's mom was a distant relative of Alevtina's

husband.) Well, well, hummed Alevtina. She held her breath and waited. The unborn child also waited in the dark. Nothing stirred. Black silhouettes of the apple trees loomed in the twilight. The warm air smelled of phlox.

A.A.'s shadow cut through the orchard in the direction of the outhouse. Alevtina liked his deftness. A few minutes later A.A. emerged and breathed out the foul air. Alevtina pounced.

"Good evening, sir. How can you explain yourself?"

"Excuse me?" A.A.'s foot froze in midair.

"I don't need your excuses. How much do you owe?"

"Who, me?" A.A. thought for a second that the woman mistook him for someone else, and instead of fleeing to his porch and hiding under the blanket he took the first step toward the samovar.

"I'm not going to yell at the top of my lungs; there are people sleeping," Alevtina remarked drily.

A.A. approached her gingerly. In the twilight, heavy Alevtina resembled a bust of a Roman emperor. She addressed A.A. imperiously.

"So how are we going to solve this problem?"

All of a sudden A.A. began to babble something about the well, saying it wasn't his fault the well was empty by the end of the day; he took only five gallons and used his own buckets, others took 50 to water their vegetables and so on.

"I see. Well, we'll find a solution somehow. Remind me of your name again?"

"Excuse me?" That was one of A.A.'s favorite evasive techniques, perfected on his pupils.

"It's Andrey, correct?"

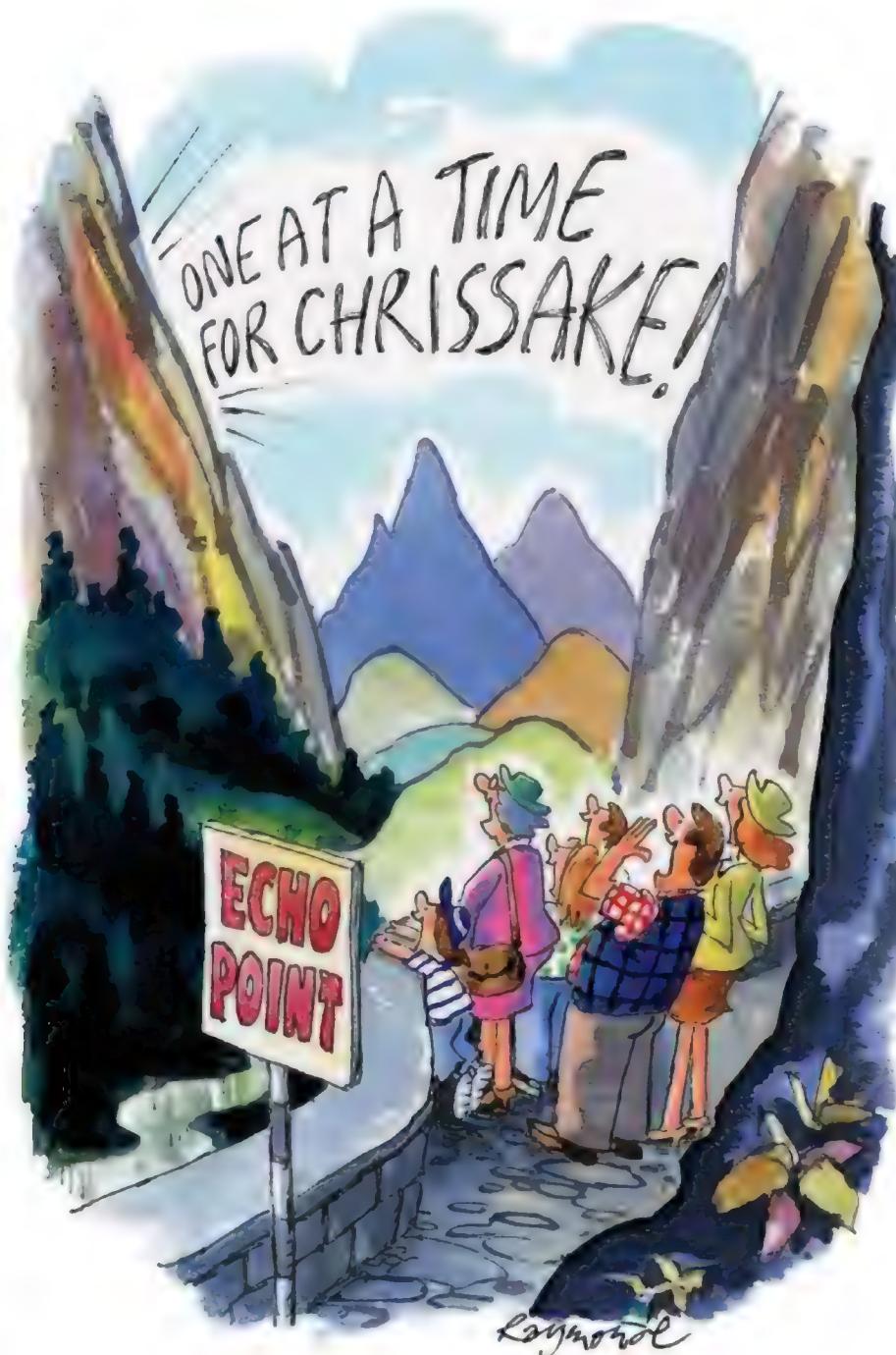
"Could be."

"So how about a cup of plain tea—I have all this hot water left—what do you say, Andrey Alexandrovich?"

"No, thanks. Actually, I'm Andrey Alexeevich...."

It was the height of the summer, the blessed time when fruit and berries ripen and fall. Alevtina hired a van and loaded it with jars of preserves. A.A. did all the loading, while the driver, a local resident, watched him idly. (Tormented by rumors about fabulous Moscow wages, local men had stopped working altogether and were swiftly turning into full-time alcoholics.) The landlady too watched Alevtina's evacuation without offering to help. But suddenly she jumped: The teacher grabbed two huge canvas bags off his porch, threw them into the van, waved her good-bye and left with Alevtina. The landlady was right in the middle of a fantasy where she got rid of the useless fireman and married her younger daughter to her tenant.

In the van, Alevtina too was thinking that A.A. was the husband she'd want for her daughter if only she had one, but instead there was a son and a leech of a daughter-in-law, and an only grandson, the light of her life. The boy was 14, spent most of his time examining his pimples and refused



to speak to his grandmother even on the phone. For him, for her grandson, Alevtina had spent her vacation sweating over the stove, boiling and pickling—the boy loved her cooking. Her own son barely ate anything; he preferred homemade liqueurs to food, but her daughter-in-law shoveled by the pound (she also smoked and cursed like a plumber) and frequently suggested that they discuss “future arrangements” concerning Alevtina’s property.

At the end of this golden summer day, the van wheeled into the beautifully maintained yard in front of Alevtina’s building. They loaded all the jars on the elevator and then carried everything into Alevtina’s spacious one-bedroom apartment, which was decorated with rugs and a crystal chandelier. On the train back, A.A. fantasized about an apartment just like that, in the same neighborhood, and also a sweet wife, and a boy of his own to whom he could teach everything he knew. He’d quit his wretched public school where kids munched on sunflower seeds and wore headphones to class. All of this came to pass some years later.

He met Nina at Alevtina’s birthday party—Alevtina had wired him money to pay for the train. By that point she must have broken off with her daughter-in-law because none of her family was present. Nina didn’t impress A.A. She was heavy, very shy, with large pale eyes. But he did notice her casual, almost indifferent manner when she was examining some old prescriptions of Alevtina’s—the manner of a true expert. Next time he saw Nina was at the hospital. He came to see his dear Alevtina at his own expense, significant for his little salary. Alevtina talked to him clearly, though with some effort, and gave him a considerable sum—“for books.” She managed not to add “to remember me by.” Although A.A. didn’t cry, he must have looked pretty miserable because Nina’s eyes filled with such sympathy and kindness that he had to turn away. Only after they were married did he find out that Nina alone had looked after Alevtina, feeding her pureed soups and fresh juices and staying with her every night after work.

It was Nina who sent him the final telegram. His train was late and A.A. had to run through the subway, then took the wrong exit and got lost; he asked for directions to the morgue from the only person who was out in that terrible neighborhood—a woman with a dog—and she told him precisely; she must have known the place from personal experience. At the morgue he was asking small groups of people where they were burying such and such, but then he saw Nina and throughout the ordeal stood next to her. Everyone else in the party stared at him wildly, but later, at the crematorium, they asked him to help carry the coffin, as if accepting his presence. Nina didn’t cry, just trembled. Alevtina looked serene and very young; she had lost a lot of weight. They closed the coffin and hammered down the lid.

The crematorium bus took them back

to the city and dropped them off in the middle of an unfamiliar street. Tipsy relatives crowded the sidewalk. Finally, one of the cousins announced that close friends and relatives were invited to the wake. He avoided looking at A.A.; they all avoided him. Suddenly, a drunk woman cousin pointed at him and inquired loudly, “And who is he? What’s he doing here?”

“This one’s looking for a drink,” explained the grandmother.

Alevtina’s fat son Victor sidled up to Nina.

“So how are things? Married yet? Come to the wake, get something to eat, to drink. You should come to all our get-togethers, you know. Where else will you go? And who is he?”

“A friend,” Nina said after a pause.

“Right. Look, you’d better make me your heir; you never know what to expect with out-of-towners.”

“What do you mean, my heir? Don’t I have sisters?” Nina seemed shocked.

“Idiot! If you marry him, he’ll inherit your apartment. He can kill you just to get it!”

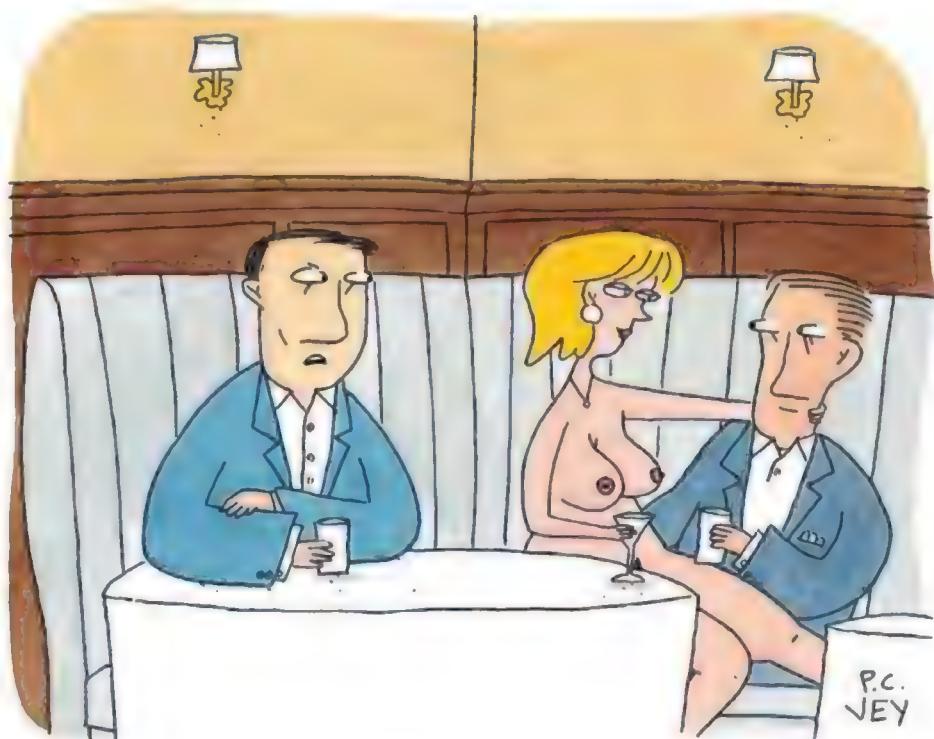
Here A.A. spoke up in his teacher’s voice, “Nina! It’s getting late.” And Nina simply turned her back on Victor and walked away. She walked slowly, with the dignity of a freshly insulted person. A.A. tore after her: At least he had to find out how to get to the subway and guessed she was headed there. He was too cowardly to ask his future wife for directions and just trudged behind her. He was leaving for home on a night train.

Suddenly a small truck drove onto the sidewalk in front of A.A. and began unloading. A.A. wanted to walk around it, but

a wave of pedestrians pushed him back. By the time he made it to the other side Nina had disappeared. He didn’t know her last name, and there was no one to ask. Alevtina used to speak so much about Nina, about her wretched life with the difficult, ailing mother whom Nina had endured to the end after her two sisters couldn’t take it anymore and left the old woman. A.A. used to listen to these stories with an inward smile: He understood perfectly well what was behind them and he also knew why Alevtina had called for him at the hospital. Alevtina’s scheming had always caused inner resistance in him; he had been resisting Nina silently for a long time, but now that Alevtina was gone there was no one to resist, and his life lost its meaning.

Ten hours remained before his train. He stood in front of the subway station in the freezing wind, cold and hungry, aching from unrelieved tears. Then he turned around and walked back to the truck where he had last seen Nina. From there he returned to the subway station. He shuffled back and forth between the truck and the subway and suddenly he saw her: She was running in his direction, crying, her enormous eyes searching for his. They fell into each other’s arms. He scolded her for running off like that—he’d almost lost her! Then he begged her to calm down, to stop crying, everything was fine, they’d found each other. He took the heavy bag from her unfeeling hand, like all husbands do, and they walked off together.

Translated from the Russian by Anna Summers.



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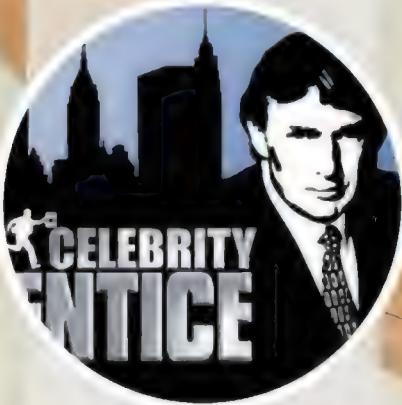
BRANDE RODERICK

TAKES CARE OF BUSINESS ON ALL-STAR APPRENTICE

There are, in fact, second acts in American lives.

After being named PMOY 2001, Brande Roderick has become quite the businesswoman, partnering with shoe company Pantofola d'Oro and founding social-gaming site FantaZ. By combining her on-camera charm with her business acumen, Brande made it to the final four on the second season of *Celebrity Apprentice*. Now Donald Trump has brought her back for an opportunity at redemption, on *All-Star Celebrity Apprentice*. This year Brande plays for Promises2Kids—and for her trophy shelf. "Becoming Playmate of the Year was my biggest personal achievement," she says, "and winning *Apprentice* will be my ultimate business accolade."

Brande's portfolio: beauty, brains and business sense.



PLAYMATE NEWS



BRITTANY BINGER

Things you may not know about Miss June 2007: She's in bed most nights by seven p.m. She's working on a jewelry line with Pascal Mouawad. She practices *hot yoga*. She plans to open a clothing store in her native Ohio because "there's no cute clothing back there."

Amanda Cerny

Wouldn't you like to skate with Miss October 2011? As part of a project by photographer Edward Duarte, you can get a strikingly sexy image of Amanda on the bottom of a seven-ply Canadian maple skateboard deck. Don't you dare grind on it.



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girlTALK

1. At the American Music Awards, PMOY 1994 **Jenny McCarthy** attacked the defenseless Justin Bieber and covered him with kisses—making her the Beliebers' least favorite Playmate.



2. Three blonde minxes, **Heather Knox**, **Jessa Hinton** and **Tiffany Toth**, were flown to New Zealand to launch Hallenstein Brothers' summer clothing line.



3. It was Rabbit vs. Penguin at Super Megafest when Miss August 1999 **Rebecca Scott** ran into Batman's archenemy.



PLAYMATE* FLASHBACK

PENNELOPE JIMENEZ became Miss March 10 years ago this month. She had worked on a commercial for the XFL (remember that?) with PMOY 1998 Karen McDougal, who suggested her to PLAYBOY. When we met Penelope she made us want to try new things. For instance, she said her ideal evening was to "sit at home in sweats, order a pizza with ranch dressing." We found the dressing pairs best with pepperoni.





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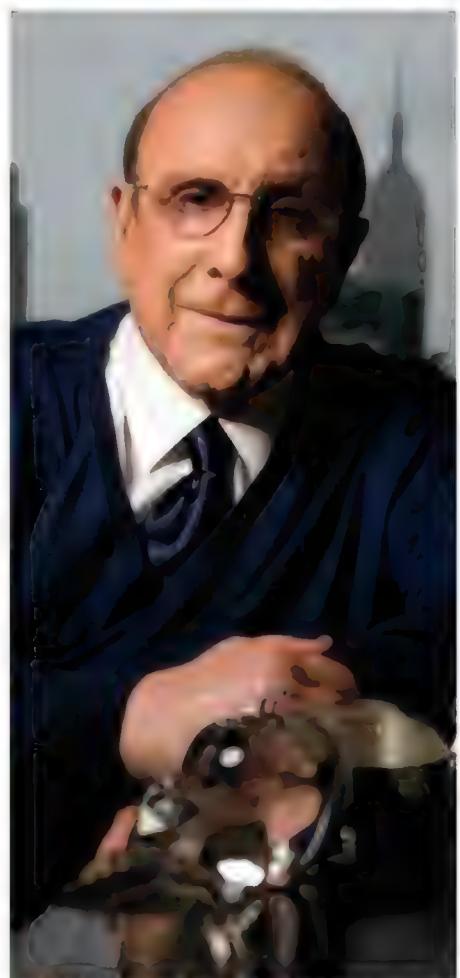
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SEX & MUSIC ISSUE—ONE MAKES THE OTHER SO MUCH MORE FUN. IN OUR ANNUAL TRIBUTE TO VERTICAL AND HORIZONTAL DANCING, RESIDENT CRITIC **ROB TANNENBAUM** UNVEILS THE ARTISTS YOU WON'T WANT TO MISS IN 2013 AND SELECTS THE GREATEST SONGS ABOUT SEX (THERE HAVE BEEN A FEW).

ALL THE RAVE—DRUGGED-OUT SEXUALLY LIBERATED THRILL SEEKERS ARE MOVING TO THE BEAT OF ELECTRONIC DANCE MUSIC AT HUGE, EXPENSIVE PARTIES. *TRAINSPOTTING* AUTHOR **IRVINE WELSH**, WHO WITNESSED THE RISE OF EDM IN THE U.K., WONDERS IF AMERICA IS READY FOR THE LATEST BIG DEAL.

HOST IN THE MACHINE—TRACY “THE D.O.C.” CURRY PUT OUT ONE CRAZY GOOD ALBUM BEFORE DAMAGING HIS VOCAL CORDS IN A CAR WRECK. NOW HE WRITES HITS FOR OTHERS. **ALEX PAPADEMAS** PROFILES THE LONG-OVERLOOKED HIP-HOP TALENT.

HITMAKER—PRODUCER **CLIVE DAVIS** HAS HELPED LAUNCH (AND RELAUNCH) THE CAREERS OF ARETHA FRANKLIN, ROD STEWART, CARLOS SANTANA AND MANY OTHERS. HE TALKS SHOP IN A CATCHY *PLAYBOY* INTERVIEW WITH **DAVID SHEFF**.

OUR KIND OF GIRL—LENA DUNHAM, THE CONTROVERSIAL 26-YEAR-OLD CREATOR AND STAR OF HBO’S *G/RLS*, GIVES

THE SKINNY TO **DAVID RENGIN** IN 20Q ON THE HIT SERIES, HER \$3.7 MILLION BOOK DEAL AND WHY VOTING IS LIKE SEX.

POT AND CIRCUMSTANCE—WITH MARIJUANA BECOMING LEGAL ACROSS THE COUNTRY, CELEBRITY CHEFS PREPARING WEED-THEMED DINNERS AND BOUTIQUE DISPENSARIES SELLING ORGANIC STRAINS, THE DRUG HAS GONE LEGIT AND LUXE. YOU’LL WANT TO PASS ALONG OUR COAST-TO-COAST GANJA GUIDE.

MIXED CROWD—NOT ONLY HAS LARRY’S DATE BEEN STOLEN BY A HANDSOME ROCKET SCIENTIST AT A PARTY OF SCI-FI WRITERS (HUBBARD, HEINLEIN, ET AL.), SHE’S NOW INVOLVED WITH SWINGING OCCULTISTS. IT’S AN EXCLUSIVE PREVIEW OF **JAKE ARNOTT**’S WILD THRILLER *THE HOUSE OF RUMOUR*.

TWO LIVES LOST—SEAN SMITH, AN ENVOY KILLED IN THE ATTACK ON THE U.S. CONSULATE IN LIBYA, LED A DOUBLE LIFE. IN A STRANGE ONLINE WORLD CALLED EVE HE WAS ALSO A DIPLOMAT, KNOWN AS VILE RAT. AS **DAVID KUSHNER** REPORTS, SMITH’S TWO WORLDS COLLIDED AT THE WRONG TIME.

PLUS—A CLASSIC *PLAYBOY* INTERVIEW WITH **DAVID BOWIE** BY **CAMERON CROWE**, THE STYLINGS OF DJ AND RAPPER **DIPLO**, THE LOVELY MISS APRIL WELCOMES SPRING, AND MORE.

“Wherever life takes you, you will always be my daughter.”

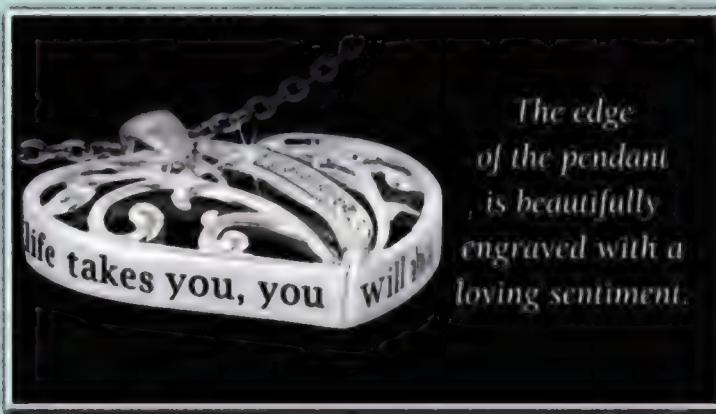
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Supplement to Playboy Magazine



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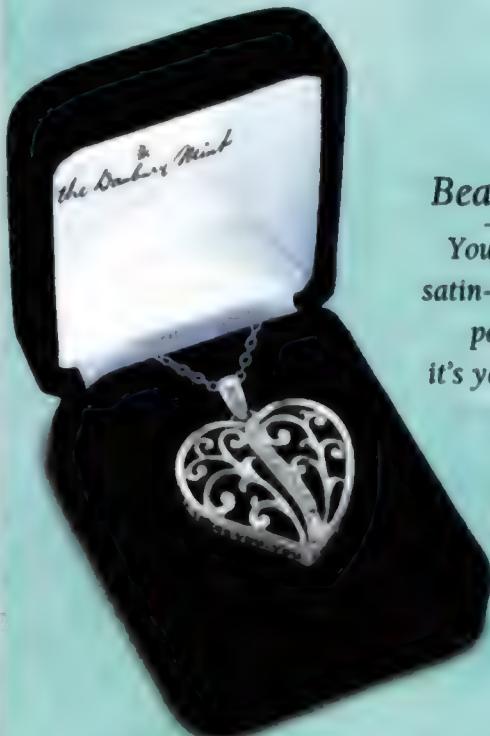
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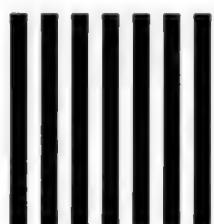
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Château Bourdicotte 2009,
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Ombrato 2011,
Puglia

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Pérez Cruz La Higuera 2009,
Maipo Valley

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Finca Los Príncipes 2010,
Rioja

Never a Better Time for Chianti

The quality of Tuscany's most famous red has never been better. Native star Canaiolo joins forces with cherry-laced Sangiovese in this pasta and pizza-ready gem.

Montagnana 2011,
Chianti

Classic Aussie Cab — Smooth and Rich

Black-fruited Cabernet takes on a cool, minty edge in the famed terra rossa of the Limestone Coast — and Steve Grimley knows just where to go for premium grapes.

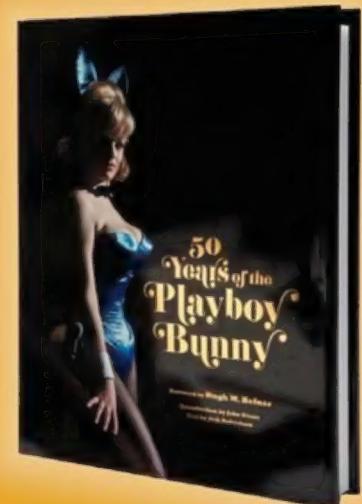
Albacore 2011,
Limestone Coast

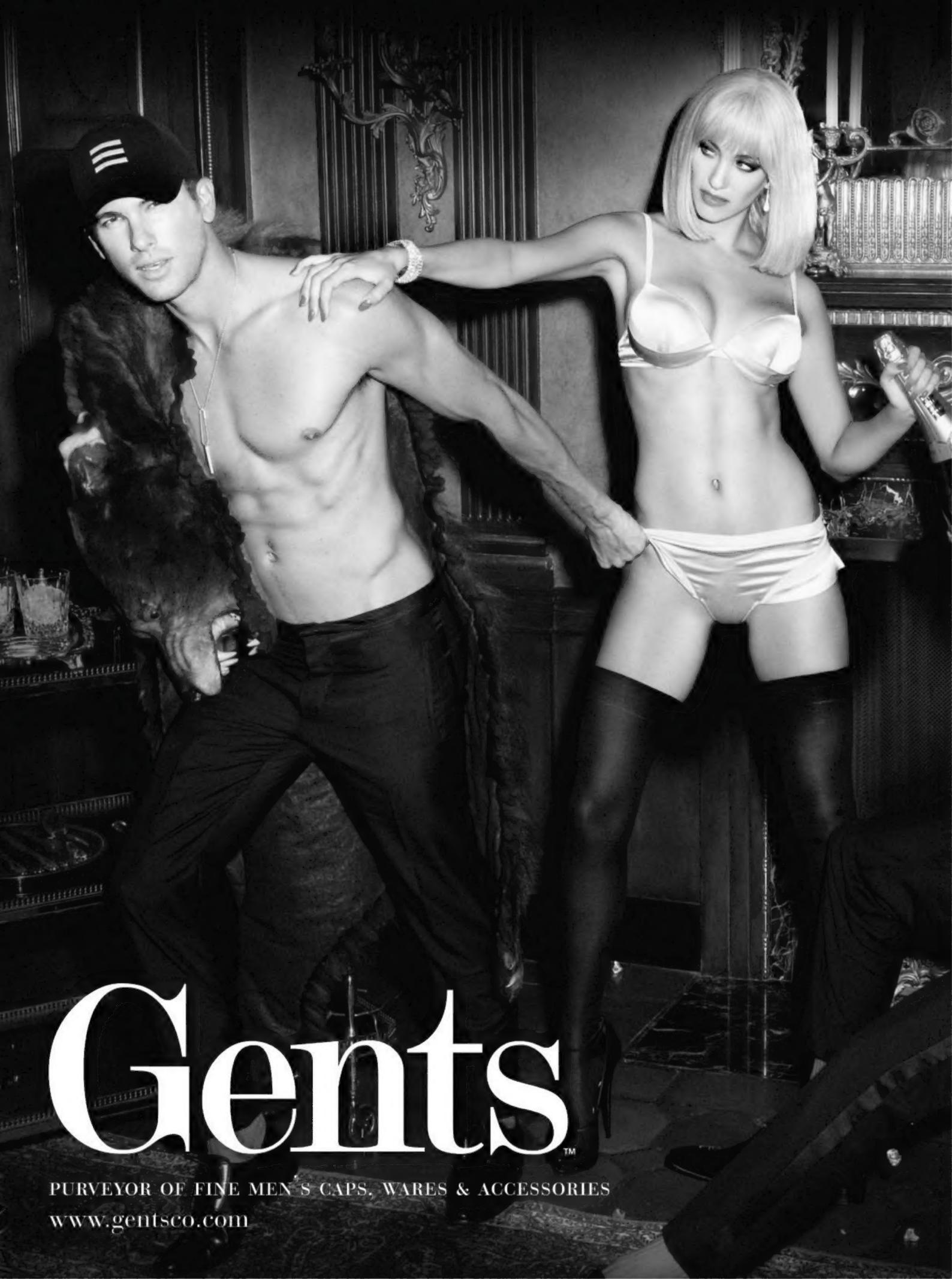
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50 years of the Playboy Bunny

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